

THE NOBLE PATH TO PURITY: A SET OF DHAMMA TALKS

BY VENERABLE ĀCARIYA INTHAWAI SANTUSSAKO

NA KHAM NOI FOREST MONASTERY,

NA YUNG DISTRICT, UDON THANI PROVINCE, THAILAND

TRANSLATED FROM THE THAI BY WORAPHAT ARTHAYUKTI



**SABBADANAM DHAMMADANAM JINATI
THE GIFT OF TRUTH EXCELS ALL
OTHER GIFTS**

This book is a free gift of Dhamma
and may not be offered for sale.

Viriya Nasylavanta Foundation of
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery sponsored
this publication for free distribution.

Sadhu ! sadhu ! Sadhu !

THE NOBLE PATH TO PURITY: A SET OF DHAMMA TALKS



BY VENERABLE ĀCARIYA INTHAWAI SANTUSSAKO
NA KHAM NOI FOREST MONASTERY,
NA YUNG DISTRICT, UDON THANI PROVINCE, THAILAND

TRANSLATED FROM THE THAI BY WORAPHAT ARTHAYUKTI

THIS BOOK IS A GIFT OF DHAMMA AND PRINTED
FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION ONLY.



Viriya Nasylavanta Foundation of
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery

Copyright © 2019 by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako

May 2019
5,000 copies

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced, in whole or
in part, for commercial purposes. For those wishing to print this
book for free distribution please contact:

Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery, Na Yung District,
Udon Thani Province 41380, Thailand

Printed in Thailand by
Silpa Siam Packaging & Printing Co.,LTD . Tel. (662)444-3351-9
Fax. (662)444-0078 E-mail : silpasiamprinting@hotmail.com



Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako

A BIOGRAPHY OF VENERABLE ĀCARIYA INTHAWAI SANTUSSAKO

Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako was born in Wang village, Nong Sung district in Thailand's north eastern province of Mukdahan on 27 April 1945. After completing his primary education at the age of 12 his parents brought him to be educated in Buddhism under the tutelage of Venerable Ācariya Larh Khemapatto in nearby Banpot Khiri monastery (commonly called, Phu Jor Kor), and shortly thereafter was ordained as a novice. At the age of 20 Venerable Ācariya Larh accompanied novice Inthawai to take the ordination ceremony to become a monk at another monastery in Mukdahan, and during that ceremony he was given the Buddhist Saṅgha's name of "Santussako" meaning "modest and monastic".

In 1966 Venerable Ācariya Jaam Mahapunno, Phra Inthawai's own uncle from his father's side, had his nephew spend that year's rain retreat (vassa) with him at Wiwek Wattanaram forest monastery in nearby Kamcha-I district and in 1967 he followed his uncle to the northern province of Chiangmai where his uncle took him to stay with and tend for one vassa to northern Thailand's most famous forest monk Venerable Ācariya Waen Sucinṇo at Doi Mae Pang monastery, in Prao district. Then in

1968 both returned to spend the vassa at Wiwek Wattanaram forest monastery. In 1969 Phra Inthawai went to seek out various meditation teachers and eventually met Venerable Ācariya Li Kusalatharo who resided in Baan Taad forest monastery in Muang district of Udon Thani province, headed by the country's most famous forest monk Venerable Ācariya Maha Boowa Ñāṇasampanno, and he urged Inthawai to follow him to Baan Taad monastery. Phra Inthawai was to remain there for a total of 13 vassa.

In 1983 Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako completed the construction of Na Kham Noi forest monastery, in Tambon Baan Kong, Na Yung district, Udon Thani province where he remains to this day, except for the 1987 vassa which he spent in a nearby monastery. Venerable Ācariya Maha Boowa Ñāṇasampanno would visit him regularly and bring food for the kitchen of Na Kham Noi forest monastery, as well as build the cement fence around the monastery, the water catchment areas, and even the food delivery system to feed wild boars living in the forest within the monastery.

In 2005 a group of medical students from the faculty of medicine, Mahidol University ordained during the summer months, and Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako used that opportunity to record the Dhamma talks he gave during their stay onto compact discs, and ever since all the Dhamma talks

he has given have been duly recorded for distribution to lay followers as CDs. At the same time the newly established “Viriya Na Sylvanta Foundation of Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery” asked to publish these Dhamma talks for free distribution as gifts of the Dhamma.

Since 1995 Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako has been involved in the construction of stupas in remembrance of past Venerable Ācariyas and nuns who practice the Dhamma well and abide by high moral standards, such as the stupa of Venerable Ācariya Tem Khantiko at Tha Varee Sri Sakorn forest monastery, Nam Som district, Udon Thani province, the stupa of Venerable Ācariya Larh Khemapatto at Banpot Khiri monastery, Mukdahan province, the stupa of Mae Chee Kaew Sianglam, Baan Huay Sai Nunery in Mukdahan province, the stupa of Venerable Ācariya Chandsom Kittikaro at Na Sida forest monastery, Ban Phue district, Udon Thani province, the stupa of Venerable Ācariya Pien Viriyo, Nong Kong forest monastery, Ban Phue district, Udon Thani province, and the stupas of Venerable Ācariya Maha Boowa Ñāṇasampanno in both Roi-Et province and at Baan Taad forest monastery in Udon Thani province.

The construction of Na Kham Noi forest monastery started in 1980 and Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako spent his first vassa there in 1983. Later on he established affiliated

monasteries. There are currently 20 affiliated monasteries and one nunnery in the country, as well as one affiliated monastery in Indonesia.

Within the Srinagarind Hospital in Khonkaen province Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako established a 36-bed medical wing for ailing monks and nuns, and established a Foundation to provide financial support for those hospitalized there.

He established the Luang Ta Maha Boowa Ñāṇasampanno Foundation to give financial support for ailing monks, novices, and nuns hospitalized at the Udon Thani hospital, and provided funds for the construction of a parking lot building for 600 cars adjacent to the hospital.

Over the years Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako has provided assistance to several hospitals in north eastern Thailand through the donation of medical equipment and funding for the construction of new wings in a number of State hospitals such as the Udon Thani hospital, the Khonkaen hospital, the Srinagarind hospital, the Nam Som hospital, the Na Yung hospital, the Tha Bo Phrayuparaj hospital, the Chum Phae hospital, the Nong Sung hospital, the Kumphawapi hospital, the Nong Han hospital and the Phen hospital.

He has also donated funds for the construction of classroom

buildings in schools in north eastern Thailand such as in Mukdahan, Nong Khai, Loei, Ubon Ratchathani, Nong Bua Lamphu and Sakon Nakhon provinces.

Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako is currently 73 years of age and has been a monk for 53 vassa. He has diligently taught the Dhamma to his disciples that include monks, novices, and lay followers based on the teachings of the kammaṭṭhāna teachers in the lineage of Venerable Ācariya Mun Bhūridatto in order to help sustain Buddhism. The late Mae Chee Kaew Sianglam who was taught the Dhamma by Venerable Ācariya Mun himself once said of Inthawai that “he came to this world in order to build virtuous charisma”.

WORDS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The Noble Path to Purity” is a translation of 7 Dhamma talks presented to monks, novices and lay followers at Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery, Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province on a number of occasions. These talks have been published in the Thai language several times already, and positive feedback was received from readers. In addition, recommendations were made that English translations of these Dhamma talks would be beneficial to foreign readers interested in the Dhamma, as the practice of the Dhamma is currently widespread, especially the teachings of anapanasati, or mindfulness using the awareness of the breath. For example, such mindfulness methods are being introduced to young pupils in schools in the United Kingdom with encouraging results. In western societies, individuals and families, as well as personnel in the work place, are being exposed to the Noble Eight-Fold Path or other Buddhist practices modified for use in everyday life, aimed at calmness and happiness of mind, to lead one’s life based on the law of “causes and consequences” with full awareness of the deceits of defilements, leading towards cleansing one’s mind from greed, anger, obsession, passion, hatred, and delusion. There are significant signs that Buddhism could implant itself in the western world in the future.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Woraphat Arthayukti who endeavored to undertake and complete the translation of the entire 7 Dhamma talks. This will be the very first book of Dhamma talks I have given to be published in the English language. I hope that their contents will be beneficial to those who aspire to cleanse their body, speech, and mind based on the processes leading to the path of flawless purity of the mind, which is the sublime goal of Buddhism.

I would like to acknowledge and commend the “Viriya Na Sylvanta Foundation of Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery” which has recognized the importance of publishing this English translation of “The Noble Path to Purity” to be distributed as a gift of the Dhamma.

With Metta,

Phra Inthawai Santussako

(Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako)

Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province
December 2018

CONTENTS

A Biography of Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako	VII
Words of Acknowledgements	XII
1. Proclaiming a Dhamma that runs counter to the Ways of Life of the World	2
2. The Path to the Realms of Peacefulness	28
3. Fundamentals of the Practice to attain Samādhi	52
4. The Basics of Samadha Meditation	74
5. Walking and Sitting Postures to enhance Samādhi and contemplate Wisdom	88
6. Looking at the Mind through Contemplation of the Body	110
7. Precepts, Meditative Calm, Wisdom and the three components of a tree: Bark, Sapwood, and Heartwood	124
Glossary	154
Translator's Note	163

PROCLAIMING A DHAMMA THAT RUNS
COUNTER TO THE WAYS OF LIFE OF
THE WORLD

A Dhamma Talk given
by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako
to Monks and Lay Devotees
on the occasion of Āsālha Pūjā day on 20 July 2007,
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province

I wish to say a few words. Today is a very important day in Buddhism. It marks the day when Prince Siddhattha was born, it also marks the day when Prince Siddhattha attained enlightenment and became the Buddha. It is the main pillar of Buddhism as it marks the day when the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha came into being together. These events occurred some 2550 years ago. Upon achieving enlightenment on the full moon of the sixth month the Buddha spent time consuming the ecstasy of deliverance in the vicinity of the bodhi tree under which he had attained enlightenment, by spending 7 days here, 7 days there, 7 days at another site, etc... until he spent the entire time he had allocated to himself.

The Buddha then considered what to do next. His plans to proclaim the Dhamma that he had discovered was damped by a feeling of discouragement. **Discouragement because the Dhamma he had attained was something that went against the ways of life of people in the world, against the natural aspirations of human beings. If he were to proclaim the Dhamma or teach it to people they might either oppose it or accept it. This was a dilemma for the Buddha because the Dhamma went against the thinking of human beings in those days.** Upon reflection he felt discouraged and hesitant about teaching the Dhamma. If he were to proclaim the Dhamma to humanity, how would he go about it, after proclaiming it people

might not listen and might be unwilling to do the practice. Then the Dhamma that he has proclaimed would be a waste. As the proclaimer he would be exhausted with nothing to show for the effort. This was how discouraged the Buddha felt when thinking about proclaiming the Dhamma to the world and to humanity. This was the major issue Lord Buddha was grappling with.

From then on it is said that a brahma from a realm of the fine material world appeared in a vision and asked the Buddha to teach the Dhamma. This suggests either the personification of the request to teach the Dhamma or the Buddha's own thoughts and reliance on the Dhamma based on compassion and brahmavihāra (the four noble sentiments) of mettā (compassion), karuṇā (kindness), muditā (empathic joy or rejoicing with others in their happiness), upekkhā (equanimity or detachment), the latter being led by a sense of the brahmā world arising in the Buddha. Therefore, the Buddha's decision to teach the Dhamma can be attributed either to personification of the request to teach the Dhamma or the Buddha's reliance on the Dhamma. But whichever was the cause of his decision to teach the Dhamma after his enlightenment is not a point of critical importance.

The Dhamma that Lord Buddha attained is perfect and unassailable in its entirety, it is a Dhamma that has been attained the proper way, and the eternal truth of the Dhamma now revealed. But while making plans to proclaim the Dhamma, the

Buddha also gave serious consideration to the reality that his teachings went against the ways of human beings in the world. **But the Buddha was compassionate enough to consider himself a human being and a part of all living entities, and he asked himself: should he proclaim the Dhamma how can he assume that no one would achieve enlightenment, wouldn't such an assumption be tantamount to underestimating and slighting other human beings? He then asked himself another question: why wouldn't communicating with other human beings not be able to attract interest from those who are receptive to the logic of the cause and consequence principle, and not be able to attract interest from those in search of correct moral principles to follow? Therefore, upon reflection that as the Buddha he was also a human being in a position to proclaim the Dhamma to other human beings of varying levels of preparedness to understand; upon reflection of the logic of those questions the Buddha made the decision to proclaim the truth of the Dhamma, the truth that he had attained on the full moon of the sixth month.**

The Buddha now turned his attention to those most deserving to be the first to hear the Dhamma. His first thoughts went to the two ascetics by the name of ascetic Alara Kalama and ascetic Uddaka Ramaputta under whom he had studied and practiced sometime before attaining enlightenment. But his special insight told him that both ascetics had passed away shortly before.

His attention then turned to others most deserving to hear the Dhamma he had attained. And the five ascetics, **Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanāma and Assaji who were all the children of brahmins from the city of Kapilavastu came to mind.**

When the Buddha was newly born his father King Suddhodana invited a number of brahmins to a ceremony to inspect the baby for any of the 32 signs of a great being (mahāpurisalakkhaṇa) and predict his future. After the ceremony the brahmins who had sons gave instructions to their sons to observe Prince Siddhattha when he becomes an adult, and if he decides to leave the palace to become an ascetic, to follow him and serve him, and be ready to listen to his sermons because Prince Siddhattha is destined to become a Buddha. These brahmins who had made the forecast knew that because of their age they would not be present to witness the event and hence told their sons to follow Prince Siddhattha if he were to ordain as an ascetic and bring their friends along.

Brahmin Koṇḍañña was actually the youngest by many years of all the brahmins who were invited into the palace to forecast the mahāpurisalakkhaṇa of the newborn who was to become the Buddha. After Prince Siddhattha left the palace to ordain as an ascetic and before attaining enlightenment Koṇḍañña and four ascetics, who were sons of brahmins invited into the

palace several years earlier, followed Prince Siddhattha. They kept themselves informed of his whereabouts, and served as his attendants ready to listen to sermons whenever Prince Siddhattha attained enlightenment. They served him for a total of six years while Prince Siddhattha was living in forests and testing his practice in numerous ways.

Before attaining enlightenment Prince Siddhattha practiced meditation by trying various methods, if one did not work for him he would try another. And the very last time he abandoned a particular method of practice is when the five ascetics who were following him lost their confidence in him. This occurred when Siddhattha decided to fast, a fast that lasted 49 days, during which the ascetics watched him closely. As he refused to eat the five ascetics all felt that he was now becoming serious in his practice by abstaining from taking food, and they expected him to attain enlightenment this time. **But then after abstaining from taking food for a total of 49 days Prince Siddhattha reflected on the results of his fasting and realized that fasting was only causing physical suffering without obtaining any results and felt that this was not the way to achieve enlightenment. As a result he decided to end his fast and started to eat again.** This was the moment the five ascetics lost their faith in Siddhattha who had seemed steadfast in his practice but had now given up and was starting to eat again. They felt that he would not achieve enlightenment in

this life and decided to leave him. All five travelled to the deer park of Isipathana Migadaya in Varanasi where they established an ashram made up of small huts where all five could reside and do the practice on their own.

Siddhattha was left by himself amidst the calmness, the peacefulness, the tranquility of being alone. The total absence of distractions whatsoever must have given him ample opportunity to accelerate his perseverance in doing the practice. The environment must have encouraged him to be particularly diligent in his mental development practice. But prior to that he had met physical suffering in the same way as the practitioners of austere practices of other religions in those days, as there were more religions in the Indian subcontinent in those days than there are today. Today, traces of ancient religions can still be seen but in those days there must have been many more. Siddhattha had tried many ways and methods in his practice and lastly had tried physical suffering by fasting over a long period of time, but he no longer saw physical suffering as the proper way to attain enlightenment.

He therefore turned his contemplations to focus inwardly toward his mind, toward that which knows, meaning focusing on the intangible. Basically, he turned his attention to that which knows and that which thinks, and began to examine the best way to deal with that part of the mind where thoughts are created. This

is the part that thinks and creates thoughts incessantly. How would it be possible to control that particular part of the mind he asked himself. Finally, on the full moon of the sixth month the Buddha did the practice during which he contemplated and dealt with the mind that knows. The Buddha started his practice by sitting in the meditation posture. **The interesting point about the Buddha attaining enlightenment is to understand where enlightenment occurred, how enlightenment was achieved, and what causes led to the enlightenment. These points are key to understanding the events. Lack of details or explanations of the causes that resulted in the enlightenment might result in people losing faith and question the occurrence itself.** I am mentioning this so that we can study the details of how, where, and the reasons for which the Buddha attained enlightenment, what were the causes, what knowledge did the Buddha attain, and what were the details of his practice just prior to enlightenment. We all need to study these details to fully understand what occurred.

The future Buddha sat in the meditation posture with his back straight, as mentioned earlier, facing the east toward the direction of the rising sun. He kept his mindfulness close to him, his right leg on top of the left, and his right palm on top of the left. Then he focused his mindfulness on his breathing in and out. This was the kammaṭṭhāna of the Buddha. Keeping mindfulness on the breath being inhaled knowing

that the breath is being inhaled, keeping mindfulness on the breath being exhaled knowing that the breath is being exhaled, just keeping mindfulness on the breath being inhaled and exhaled. This was the practice that the Buddha chose on the night of his enlightenment. During that night he achieved 3 levels of insights, *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* or insights into his own past lives, *cutūpapātāñāṇa* or insights into transmigration or the births and deaths of sentient beings in various realms, *āsavakkhayañāṇa* or insights into the total removal of defilements from his own mind. After achieving enlightenment and becoming the Buddha on the night of the full moon of the sixth month he reflected on the Dhamma he had attained and realized that the Dhamma ran counter to the ways of life of human beings in the world, a world of attachments, greed, anger, and deception, but the Buddha wanted people to reflect on non-attachment, on generosity, on non-anger, on non-deception which all went against the ways of the world. And thus, after he had attained enlightenment, he felt discouraged upon considering the obstacles he would face trying to teach the Dhamma as people would continue to follow the ways of the world. It would be like asking people to swim upstream.

As mentioned earlier Lord Buddha reflected that he was after all a human being like all of us, and asked himself: Why would people not understand if he tried to explain the Dhamma because

there ought to exist some people sage and intelligent enough to understand, leaving aside the ignorant and the misguided. And he would seek out those sage and intelligent people and teach them. The Buddha made the comparison between people of varying mental capabilities with four levels of the growth of lotus flowers: the first level with the lotus bud barely appearing from the root underwater, the second level with the lotus bud appearing as a lone bud but well underwater, the third level with the lotus bud just about to reach the water surface, and the fourth level with the lotus bud already emerging from the water ready to flower upon exposure to sunlight. Similarly, people also have four levels of virtuous charisma as explained by the Buddha: those who have tended to their practice in past lives are like the lotus bud that has emerged from the water and awaiting the rays from the sun, similarly to those awaiting the teachings of the Buddha whose teachings are like the rays from the sun. After the Buddha proclaimed the Dhamma those with strong virtuous charisma and ready to accept the teachings would blossom, achieve enlightenment and become arahant, as so many who did achieve that experience in those early days.

For that reason the Buddha gave careful consideration to who to teach on the upcoming Āsālha Pūjā day, on the full moon of the eighth month, after having himself attained enlightenment on the full moon of the sixth month. After travelling all the way to the town where the five ascetics

were residing, it would have been around this time or 7 or 8 pm on that Āsāḷha Pūjā day, the Buddha gave his very first sermon entitled **Dhammacakkakappavattana Sutta** over 2,000 years ago. The five ascetics sat down to listen with some initial apprehension because their trust in Siddhattha had been eroded. Lack of faith and trust can easily cause a person to reject whatever is being said. Thus the Buddha asked the following introductory question “Listen all of you, have you ever heard me saying that I have realized my goal and have attained enlightenment? Have you ever heard such pronouncements from me before?” This comment was designed to prod them. And upon thinking back the five ascetics realized that they had indeed never heard these words ever being uttered.

The five ascetics became intent on listening, and when he saw that he had their full attention the Buddha started his sermon. And in this sermon the sentence that prompted Aññā Koṇḍañña to see the Dhamma was the following: **“Whatever arises naturally fades away and disappears naturally”**. What Aññā Koṇḍañña saw through this sentence was the reality of impermanence, the uncertainty of things. From these words uttered by the Buddha he realized the impermanence of things and was able to let go of attachments: why should we be attached to objects that are impermanent, among all things our physical body is born, then ages, is afflicted by disease, and then dies. Even our dwellings once built will

start to decay, and will eventually collapse onto the ground. Whatever is born will eventually all disintegrate into the elements of earth, water, wind and fire. This is what Aññā Koṇḍañña realized, and while listening he stopped holding on to attachments, he let go of attachments in his mind, and attained Sotāpanna, the first stage of enlightenment. Upon attaining Sotāpanna he declared to the Buddha that he had now attained that stage leading to enlightenment and asked to ordain as a monk, upon which the Buddha pronounced the words “*Aññāsi vata, bho, Koṇḍañño*” meaning “*Now Koṇḍañña understands the Dhamma, he has seen the Dhamma*”. The Buddha was certainly satisfied in his proclamation of the Dhamma that day as he now had Aññā Koṇḍañña as one witness to his achievement. Thereupon he pronounced the ordination words of “*ehi-bhikku upasampadā*” meaning “O monk! Come and take the ordination. The Dhamma I have declared is correct”, and Venerable Aññā Koṇḍañña became the very first monk in the Buddhist religion.

The Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha came into being together on Āsālha Pūjā day, on this very day. Subsequently the Buddha gave another sermon, and during that sermon the other four ascetics attained the first level of enlightenment, and ordained as monks. **The following day the Buddha explained the Dhamma pakinaka and the Anatta-lakkhana Sutta dealing with the contemplation of impermanence, suffering, and**

not-self in greater details. From that sermon all five ascetics became arahant together. Āsāḷha Pūjā day is regarded as the first day or the first key that unveiled Buddhism, or the first time that the *Triple Gems* or the “Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha” came into being simultaneously in the world. The following day is regarded as the day when all five acetics attained enlightenment. There were now a total of six arahants in the world, the Buddha himself and the five ascetics or six in total.

As there were now six arahants in the world the Buddha made the pronouncement that “In order to disseminate the Dhamma to sentient beings that have the capability to understand, to those who have sparse impurities or have sparse defilements, let us not travel in the same direction, let us travel in separate directions to teach. There exist those in the world who will listen to the Dhamma that we teach”. **From that day on each of the five former ascetics and Lord Buddha travelled in different directions to proclaim the Dhamma. This is how the Dhamma teachings of Lord Buddha were disseminated. Wherever the Dhamma was proclaimed it was praised and revered, and when the cause and consequence principle of the Dhamma was explained people would full-heartedly engage in the practice, and many would achieve enlightenment one after the other.** This is the way the Dhamma of Lord Buddha was disseminated. The dissemination of the Dhamma was sustained and the

number of people who ordained in the monkhood increased continually. The campaign of dissemination of the Dhamma was not undertaken without great physical effort by the Buddha at the expense of the four elements of earth, water, wind, and fire that made up his physical body. And eventually the physical body of the Buddha gave way and he passed away, in the same way as what will happen to our own physical bodies, something none of us can escape from. Our physical body will behave in the same manner. Eventhough some people may be obsessed with and talk about their life achievements, about their longevity, about the happiness they have enjoyed. But these are merely momentary deceptions because the end has not yet come, and when the end actually arrives then they will stop talking.

I therefore invite all lay disciples to engage in the Dhamma practice today. Let us all be reminded that our lives will not remain permanent, we do not know when we will breathe our last breath, no one can guarantee us when that will happen. Therefore, let us not be unmindful, let us accumulate as much meritorious deeds as possible. If we all have accumulated goodness within ourselves in this life, in this world, we should live a life of comfort in the next realm without worries as we have already accumulated enough virtuous charisma. Having already given dāna, upheld sīla, practiced meditation (bhāvanā), we will go to the next realm without reason for any concerns.

If death approaches or diseases come calling but we have failed to prepare ourselves correctly beforehand then beware! We can never tell what will happen when afflicted with a disease. For example, we could be diagnosed with a cancer but have not prepared ourselves by accumulating goodness, and I can assure you that we will be shaken up, we will vascillate and sway, we will not know what to do next, we may not be in tears but we will not be smiling, and whatever we do will not solve anything. Eventually we will become lonely and depressed as there does not appear to be a way out, we will have no idea what will happen next. This is the fate of those who have not thought things out before, not prepared themselves. This is what will happen to them.

But if all of us have prepared ourselves well by having already accumulated goodness, whatever happens to us we will be ready to accept, Oh it is now my time! we just have to accept that it is now time for us to go, as we have already seen so many people pass away. When it is our time we need to understand that we cannot live forever and ever, we may want to reach old age before dying but with whom can we negotiate with, who can grant us additional years in our lives? Only ourselves can give additional years to our lives, it all depends on our past deeds, the deeds we have done in the past. We must have done bad deeds which has led our life to be short, had we accumulated good deeds our lives would have been longer.

But sometimes we might live too long, and with old age become clumsy and unable to think clearly, yet death does not come and our affliction does not go away, and we aren't getting any better. This leads to another type of unfortunate situation. We just do not know whether the results of our past deeds will turn out satisfactorily or not for all of us.

Suffering does not exist for those who are not reborn in any realm. Meaning that only those who are reborn will experience suffering repeatedly. To sum up: suffering inevitably comes with old age, suffering also comes with longevity, dying young causes suffering, dying slowly also causes suffering. Then what age would be an appropriate age to die or at what age would we be satisfied to die? Or would we ever be satisfied with any of those options. In reality at whatever age we die we will be highly distressed when death comes, and there are no exceptions for anyone. When the moment arrives we will all meet with suffering. As suffering arises it explains the reason for which the Buddha says that to be born causes suffering, growing old causes suffering, being afflicted with diseases causes suffering, dying causes suffering, to be born in this world causes suffering. Upon careful reflection this is what actually happens, unless we fool ourselves. Beware: If we fool ourselves day in and day out by telling ourselves that eating tasty food brings happiness, that sleeping well at night brings happiness, that talking happily with friends brings happiness, that having monetary wealth and

material assets brings happiness. But upon careful reflection do these things really give us true happiness, or do they fool us into believing that they give us happiness. Upon careful reflection of the teachings of Lord Buddha those are shown to be false beliefs, beliefs that give a false sense of happiness.

While considering these false beliefs let us use our mindfulness and wisdom, use the teachings of the Buddha as reference, as the basis, or use the teachings as a mirror to look at ourselves to prevent all of us, who are still obsessed with life's comforts, from being mindful while leading our lives. And do not forget to practice meditation **to calm our mind as it is the cornerstone, the foundation that I have mentioned earlier. Let us now study how Lord Buddha was able to attain calmness and peacefulness of mind. In his practice he resolved to observe the air being inhaled and exhaled. So let us resolve to observe the air as we breathe in and breathe out while having mindfulness within ourselves, and silently recite a mantra like the word Buddhho repetitively in silence.** Venerable Ācariya Mun (Luang Poo Mun), and the Venerable meditation teachers in the lineage of Venerable Ācariya Mun have taught their disciples to recite a mantra. If we only observe the air while breathing in and out there will be vacant space in between, causing the mind to easily wander out. To prevent this the method is to observe the air while breathing as follows: while breathing in recite the word Bud, while breathing out

recite the word dho, Buddho, Buddho...., synchronizing it with the breathing, Buddho, Buddho...., while having mindfulness. Then repeat this again and again several times. For some people it does not take long, such as those who have been ascetics in previous lives, or people who have practiced before and then were reborn in this life. It is similar to floating water lenses covering the surface of a pond and hiding the water from view. But then when such persons ordain, their past meritorious deeds help them push away the water lenses to see the fresh water. If such persons were to sit in meditation they will be able to attain calmness with ease, and be within reach of the truth.

The meditation teachers say the strength of virtuous charisma differs from one person to the other. Some have failed to do the practice in past lives, and every time they attempt to do the practice they find it difficult. Whereas for some as soon as they sit in meditation very quickly their mind achieves calmness. This is because it is in their nature and the high quality of their virtuous charisma, because they have already done much practice in the past. While it might be possible to compete on the basis of physical endurance such as in “boat racing or boat rowing” or other areas, but do not try to compete on the basis of virtuous charisma. It is therefore our role to accumulate meritorious deeds for ourselves, they do not go anywhere else, they stay within our mind. Such as today when we recite prayers, make donations, and observe the precepts,

or practice meditation, these meritorious deeds will continually support us and contribute to our well-being. Then one day in another realm, in another life, if we sit in meditation we will achieve calmness and tranquility of mind easily, this is our virtuous charisma helping us. It does not go anywhere else.

Then when our mind has achieved a certain level of calmness it can be used to contemplate according to the Dhamma teachings of Lord Buddha. But what are we supposed to focus on? The Buddha does not want us to focus on anything else but our physical body, because our mind is infatuated with our body. Why is the mind so obsessed with the body? The reason is that mind and body have had an intimate relationship with one another since birth, and the body is easy to use by the mind, the body is willing to do anything it is told to, to the obvious delight of the mind. This is why the mind is being misled by the body. And for that very reason the Buddha tells us to contemplate the body. Then the Buddha warns the mind not to be misled by the body, because one day the body will revolt. You may ask how would the body revolt? The Buddha explains how the body will betray us. It will refuse to obey the mind, it will no longer be docile as before, the body will no longer listen to orders: do not grow old but it will grow old, do not fall sick but it will fall sick, do not die but it will die. This is how the body will revolt against the mind. Since the body will revolt against the mind, and if the mind has not given thoughts to what is bound

to happen, then untold and unimaginable suffering will ensue.

It is therefore important to practice contemplation of the body as much as possible before the body no longer listens to the mind. The Buddha suggests that we think about this point as he wants us to contemplate the truth, and see impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anattā). It is the responsibility of us all to contemplate this way, or is it the responsibility of Buddhist monks only? Yes monks have that responsibility, and they do practice contemplation of the body. But for lay disciples starting with generosity (dāna), upholding the precepts (sīla), meditation (bhāvanā) is already a good start, in my opinion a very good start. But do not neglect this point, tell yourself all the time that the body will revolt, one day it will revolt for sure, it will no longer submit itself to orders from the mind. By always keeping this in mind we are then no longer misled by the body. Being no longer misled by our own body and recognizing that our own body is not truly ours how are we going to be misled by someone else's body, that other body will also grow old, will also be afflicted with diseases, and will also die eventually. And why would we cling to the idea that the physical body of another person belongs to us. Therefore, we must see things according to the truth, do not let ourselves be misguided, do not be unmindful, be ready to accept things according to the facts.

Only when the mind actually sees and understands the truth will the mind be able to give up its attachments, right here within the mind itself. Why are we so obsessed with the body, why are we obsessed with the 4 elements making up the body, why are we so obsessed with assets, money, gold, wealth, rank, titles, and since our physical bodies do not even belong to us, then how can those objects which are linked to our bodies belong to us? This is when the mind will have to reflect on itself, as we reflect within the mind itself, the mind will get to know itself, the mind will understand how it deals with the principle of cause and consequence, the mind will ask itself: why become attached despite all the evidence. This will be the turning point, the mind will let go within the mind itself, it will no longer have attachments, it will fully let go.

The mind will extricate itself from defilements (kilesa) that create attachments such as lust (rāga), anger (dosa), delusion (moha) that do not exist anywhere else but within the mind. If we want to give up these attachments we have to extricate them from the mind, we have to let go of them within the mind, the liberation or enlightenment occurs in the mind. The state of arahant is nowhere else but within the mind, the mind is the place where the arahant resides, it is not the four elements that are arahant. It can be explained like this: If the mind becomes arahant the elements also become

arahant. But if the mind has bad and immoral thoughts then the body becomes a prisoner, speech becomes a prisoner, all of these will be in a prison. But if the mind is arahant, then the body is arahant, body and speech will be arahant as the mind is already arahant. Therefore, being an arahant is attained nowhere else but in the mind. I therefore ask all of us who have made a sacrifice by ordaining in the Buddhist religion, and all lay persons present who have accumulated meritorious deeds as I have explained, do remember that our lives are not permanent, do not be unmindful, one day our body will revolt against us, when the body revolts and no longer listens to us what are we to do, we need to think about this carefully, think about this often.

At the beginning of my Dhamma talk I talked about Buddhist Lent Day, followed the day after by Āsāḷha Pūjā Day. Let me explain the background and importance of Āsāḷha Pūjā Day. I mentioned the history of Lord Buddha including that of his disciples for us to study. Then I mentioned Lord Buddha's enlightenment and the Dhamma he had attained, and the type of knowledge that was attained, and which specific knowledge led to the enlightenment under the bodhi tree. Firstly, he attained remembrance or insights into his own past lives, insights into transmigration or the birth and death of sentient beings in various realms, and insights into the total removal of defilements from his own mind through which the Buddha attained enlightenment on the full moon of the sixth month.

After attaining enlightenment, the Buddha reflected on how he would go about to disseminate Buddhism, he reflected on his strategy step by step until he decided that the five ascetics would be the first group or people to receive the eternal Dhamma. After this first step having been achieved he went on his journey to disseminate the Dhamma elsewhere. **But on this Āsālha Pūjā Day Aññā Koṇḍañña achieved Sotāpanna, after which he ordained in the Buddhist religion. And as a result of the ordination the “Triple Gems” came into being fully on this Āsālha Pūjā Day when the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha came into being together. This day is therefore considered an important day in Buddhism.**

Then tomorrow the day that follows Āsālha Pūjā Day is Buddhist Lent day. Coming back to the Buddha’s enlightenment we used the Dhamma that the Buddha attained to help our own practice. How was this done? The Buddha taught us to sit in meditation, the right leg on top of the left, the right hand on top of the left, sitting upright. But before actually starting to meditate we need to pay respect to Lord Buddha our teacher and consider the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha as a refuge we can depend on. So after we have placed our right leg on top of the left we bring our hands together in obeisance, like what we do when paying respect to our teachers, and we pay our respect to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha by thinking Buddhō,

Dhammo, Saṅgho three times. Then we bring our hands down, and place our right hand on top of the left. But before we choose the specific practice for the upcoming meditation session there is another thing we need to do. We need to have compassion within ourselves. Sometimes during the day we may have been hot tempered or at the moment we plan to sit in meditation we may still be hot tempered, still greedy, still angry, still obsessed with something, still irritable within our mind, so we must show compassion by extending loving kindness by asking ourselves to be happy, by asking that all living beings in the three worlds be happy as well. Whatever happiness we wish for ourselves we ask that other people, other living beings, and other souls have the same level of happiness that we wish for ourselves. We then repeat the phrase “Let me be happy, I wish that others be happy as well, Let me be happy, I wish that others be happy as well...” for a moment. Only then we can firmly decide to acknowledge the air inhaled and exhaled, and think “Bud” when inhaling and “Dho” when exhaling, Buddho, Buddho. This is the way to start the concentration meditation practice. From that starting point the mind can then become cool, tranquil, contented. Then after having reached calmness we can start contemplating. When the mind becomes cool and serene whatever we contemplate should follow the teachings of Lord Buddha who taught us to contemplate the body as mentioned earlier. The body will

revolt against us, let us realize this fact that our own body will revolt. Since we know that our own body will revolt against us then why should we be so attached to someone else's body. Why are we so attached to possessions, money, assets, rank, title, status, externals objects and feel that those belong to us, even though our own body does not belong to us. We are now in a position to teach our own mind. When we do that then the mind looks at itself, the mind sees itself, the mind will start to become repulsed, the mind will let go, the mind will no longer become attached. And the mind will be freed from sufferings and attain bliss. Arahant cannot be found anywhere else but in the mind, the mind is arahant, the mind is free from defilements, the mind is devoid of lust and attachments (rāga), devoid of anger (dosa), devoid of delusion (moha), the mind is one with nature, the mind is Dhamma. Today I have spoken about the practice of the Dhamma on this important day for all of us to study from. I now wish to end my talk.



*The Blessed One's Exclamation
after realized that Ven. Nanda has attained enlightenment*

***“One who has crossed over the mire,
 crushed the thorn of sensuality,
 reached the ending of delusion,
is a monk undisturbed
by pleasure & pain.”***

Udana, Handful of Leaves, volume four, p. 37

THE PATH TO THE REALMS OF PEACEFULNESS



A Dhamma Talk given
by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako
to Monks and Lay Devotees on 26 August 2006,
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province

Today is the day for us all to practice the Dhamma. We are about halfway through the vassa (rains retreat), the days will pass and eventually we will reach the end of vassa. Upon the conclusion of each vassa we will count the number of vassa accumulated. For me I have now accumulated a total of 46 vassa, next year it will be 47 vassa, then 48 vassa and so on. As the days, the months, the years pass we do not think about those days, months, and years that have passed **unless someone reminds us. And unless we are reminded we will probably never realize how many days and nights have passed. Our life has passed by us as well, actually our life is moving past us every single day.** This year we may be 50 years old, next year it will be 51 and so on, our life becomes continually shorter, and eventually we reach the end of life's journey. This is the nature of our lives.

But we never pay attention to and are never conscious of those facts, we just live day by day, month by month, year by year, and then we eventually reach the end of our time. And on our day of reckoning we just pass away, with no idea where we are heading to next. At this stage everybody seems to disappear, just like our grandfathers and grandmothers. Whenever we see someone pass away we feel a shiver pass through our spine, and then we forget the moment. When we see someone close to us pass away we shiver again, if that person is very close to us we are inconsolable and in tears and unable to do anything,

and then that moment passes. But then one day it is our turn. The moment before we pass away, before we breathe our last in and out breath is an extremely agonizing moment for our mind (citta), but what can we do because it is our turn now. **That very moment is the moment we need to prepare ourselves for. For that reason we must always be diligent. But how can we be diligent? whatever we do we are destined to die, it is inevitable and no one can escape. But before that final moment arrives we should all prepare ourselves.**

According to the foundations of the Dhamma as taught by Lord Buddha, and according to subsequent teachings of generations of meditation teachers (ācariya) they all teach to build good deeds. That is only one element of being diligent, then they teach to practice meditation (bhāvanā) to develop our mind, being mindful about death as often as possible, our lives being subject to uncertainties, we never know on which day we will disappear, on which day we will die. There is no timeline that tells whether it will happen this year or that year, no one can say for sure.

All of us who have studied and practiced the Dhamma and have listened to the teachings of Lord Buddha ought to use the concept of *opanayiko*, meaning bringing each dhamma moment inwardly within ourselves. None of us know when our time to leave this world will come just as those before us

who have passed on never knew when their time would come. **We all need to pay attention to the fact that death occurs equally for everyone without any distinction. The important foundation that Lord Buddha has established is for everyone to be diligent, perform good deeds such as generosity (dāna), abide by moral virtues (sīla), practice meditation (bhāvanā) and other activities that are useful and of substance to our lives. Such activities ought to be undertaken as often as possible but without causing problems for others.** Do undertake activities that are morally good, that follow ethical standards as taught by meditation teachers. Especially for those of us who are lay persons important activities include generosity, moral virtues, meditation. For ordained monks who are at the forefront of the practice and who have been able to disengage themselves from worldly affairs, they uphold moral virtues as a primary requirement, and then it is meditative calm (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā). These activities are also what all of us have the responsibility to strive for, in order to develop our capabilities. For what reasons we may ask? Indeed we must study and understand the reasons. If we hold that after death everything becomes nil, then none of us needs to create good deeds, there is no need to pay homage to the Buddha statue and pray or abide by moral virtues as we have done today. Whatever activity is fun and entertaining or whatever we want to do we could just go ahead and do it, there is no longer any need to follow the teachings of the Dhamma that the meditation

teachers have taught us. If we do not hold that after death there is rebirth then we can do whatever we wish, whatever our mind or our ego wants to do, do whatever we want to do. But these beliefs do not conform to the foundations of Buddhism.

We may ask ourselves a philosophical question: where do we come from? The answer is that it is necessary for our lives to have some past. The day before today existed yesterday, the present exists today, the next day will exist tomorrow. All of us have lived past lives, we are now living the present life, **the future that will come after we pass away must occur. Our lives will not just end with the here and now only. Therefore we must prepare and ready ourselves by being diligent, by accumulating good deeds within our hearts and minds through generosity, abiding by moral virtues, and the practice of meditation. This is the path that leads to realms where peacefulness and happiness reign** as we enter the afterworld in the next phase of our existence, this is the result of our physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions. These deeds are the foundations for the future, besides performing these deeds, there is no other way.

When we are about to pass away and leave the body **the feeling we experience in that moment is recorded in the soul, or we can call it the mind, or *mano* that which knows, whichever way we wish to call it but it is essentially our mind, which**

when it leaves one body is content to be reborn in another body. Immediately when this soul leaves by floating out of the body, past merits or meritorious deeds as well as past sins and bad deeds will determine its destiny by being the vehicle that carries the soul to be reborn in a new realm. Whether or not we have accumulated meritorious deeds, or whether or not our last thoughts were about such deeds such as generosity, moral virtues, meditation, then when death occurs and the soul leaves the body the waiting vehicle will take our soul to one of the many realms of existence. **If we have committed bad deeds the vehicle will take the soul to the realm of animals, to the realm of hell, or to the realm of peta. If we have accumulated good and meritorious deeds, the vehicle will take us to be reborn as physically complete human beings living in comfort, or the vehicle may take us to one of the heavenly realms, becoming deities living inside trees, becoming air deities, or other devas in one of the heavenly realms, or in the realm of the brahmās.**

If we can sufficiently cleanse our mind of defilements (kilesa) to allow us to perceive the sight of the truth, and as a result be able to hold onto goodness, to hold onto the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha, to abide by the five precepts within body, speech and mind, our mind holding onto the triple gems and the five precepts, these all constitute the essence of attaining sotāpanna, meaning becoming a first

level Buddhist noble. When we pass away we shall enter the realm of sotāpanna, but sotāpanna will eventually have to be reborn. There are three levels of sotāpanna: ekabījī sotāpanna to be reborn in only one more life, kolaṅkola sotāpanna to be reborn in 2 or 3 additional lives, sattakkhatumparama sotāpanna to be reborn in 7 additional lives. Sotāpanna have reached the first step of the path, and from then are destined to develop themselves further until they reach nibbāna. **For those who have attained the level of sakadāgāmi, meaning they have cleansed their mind one step beyond sotāpanna, when they pass away they will be reborn only once, and from then will develop themselves to become arahant.** Those who have attained the level of anāgāmi normally abide by uposatha sīla or the 8 precepts. When the anāgāmi pass away, they will no longer be reborn on this earth, but will enter a particular realm of the brahmā world that contains 5 levels: avihā, atappā, sudassā, sudassī, and akaniṭṭhā. These are the brahmā levels of anāgāmi, but from those brahmā levels they will no longer be reborn as human beings, their only path is to develop themselves further until they attain nibbāna. **The anāgāmi have let go of all cravings or lust altogether, they have yet to let go of feelings of anger (dosa) altogether, they only have some delusion (moha) remaining in their minds, they will cleanse themselves in the 5 levels of that particular brahmā realm, this will take a long time, then they will access nibbāna without being reborn in this world again.**

Individuals who have attained a noble state exist at one of 4 levels: sotāpanna, sakadāgāmi, anāgāmi, and arahant. Any of these individuals have attained a noble ultramundane state. **Below from the level of sotāpanna are mundane states where those in these states can deteriorate. Those individuals who do the practice of generosity, moral virtues, meditation may access one of the heavenly realms or one of the brahmā realms, but these individuals must eventually be reborn and must re-enter the cycle of death and rebirth. For those individuals who have been born in the brahmā realms, their residual past kamma may even cause them to be reborn in the animal world or even be reborn in the fires of hell. But if they practice the right way they can be reborn in the heavenly realms or the brahmā realms again. This is what the cycle of birth and death consists of.** It is a never-ending cycle. Those individuals who have escaped this never- ending cycle are the sotāpanna. Those who attain sotāpanna will never be reborn in the four lower worlds, they can only climb up the path to the first, second, third, and fourth levels. Those sotāpanna who are in the brahmā world will climb up without falling back. The future for other individuals who have not attained sotāpanna is uncertain because if they fall back, they may be reborn in uncertain existences, some in higher level existences, others in lower level existences. Those reborn in higher levels of existences and practice **generosity, moral virtues, meditation**, like all of us who have been born into

this life where we have had to struggle working in the fields as farmers or working as food merchants in the market to earn a living under difficult conditions, but despite these difficulties we have shown as much generosity as we can afford, we have upheld moral virtues, we have paid homage to Lord Buddha and prayed, we have aspired to attain higher levels of happiness according to the merits we have accumulated.

These are our aspirations. After we pass away from this world we hope to be reborn in better existences based on our meritorious deeds. In the future we might be reborn as children of well-endowed or even wealthy families. But in some environments in which we may be reborn we may not be brought up to think our own way, we may or may not have been educated by our parents and teachers the proper way. And it may continue like this over several future lives. If in some future life we are born in a well-endowed family but do not have a proper upbringing we could become misguided and become involved in misdeeds such as spending the family wealth on alcohol and women or other pursuits to satisfy one's desires, basically engaging in bad deeds. Our lives will then decay and in future lives we might be reborn as a rat, or as a dog, as a duck, or as a chicken during which we would endure suffering, and while trying to climb up to attain a better future once again we would experience untold miseries and suffering. But all we wish for is for our subsequent lives to be more

comfortable. **All beings in this world strive to find happiness in their present lives. All souls wish to attain a higher level of happiness, such as the happiness all of us aspire to at this very moment. From then our souls may climb higher and higher, but as we climb higher and higher we are destined to forget ourselves because of defilements such as craving, anger, delusion which will cause us to fall backward again. This is vaṭṭa, the never-ending cycle, it is boring, it is really boring.** The Buddha has seen the present lives and the cycles of birth and death of all beings. Our own present life we are currently living in is also a part of this never-ending cycle. We can currently see ourselves, we can see others as well, we can see many others such as the deaf, the blind, the incapacitated, with every one of these are going through the cycle of death and rebirth. The Buddha has contemplated these never-ending cycles of birth and death as he sought to find a way out of vaṭṭa, the never-ending cycle of birth and death.

As a result he sought to find a way to his own salvation, a way to stop suffering. He discovered that there was no other way other than the eightfold path, abiding by moral virtues, sitting in meditation, contemplating to attain wisdom (paññā). This seemed the way to stop the cycle of birth and death once and for all. He therefore decided to ordain to follow the ascetic practice. Being a Bodhisattva (a person on the path to becoming a Buddha) he was very committed and followed the ascetic

practice for 6 years until he discovered the Dhamma and attained enlightenment. From then on he explained the Dhamma he had discovered to his disciples, the 5 ascetics Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanāma, and Assaji until all of them achieved enlightenment. And then he gave sermons to Yassa who was fleeing the worldly life to lead a life of an ascetic in a funerary ground one night, and to the three Jaṭila brothers (the 3 ascetics with matted hair), until they all attained enlightenment. Subsequently he taught the Dhamma to countless other people, many of whom attained enlightenment as well. What the Buddha taught was the teachings of the Dhamma. **Today the teachings of the Dhamma remain the same, but the faith that exists today, the wisdom that exists today, the mindfulness levels and the meditative calm (samādhi) that people are able to attain today may not be as strong as in those days. In summary people have weaker virtuous charisma today, although there still exists today some practitioners who are able to achieve strong virtuous charisma.** It must be accepted that the strength of virtuous charisma cannot be created but by ourselves, it is only ourselves who can create our own virtuous charisma. What each of us has been doing today has increased our meritorious deeds, increased our virtuous charisma through generosity, meditation, mindfulness, keeping one's word, determination, and loving-kindness (mettā). In conclusion we need to strengthen and **increase our virtuous charisma in the 30 directions**

within our mind. If we fail to achieve enlightenment in this life, let us pray that it happens in the next life. But let us strive our best to make it happen in this life so that we do not continue to go through the cycle of birth and death. This is the best way.

Because in the next world, in the next life, we will find ourselves in the same situation, nothing will be better than what we are faced with now. At whatever level we might be reborn we will experience suffering or discontent (*dukkha*) at that level, if only going through the process of growing old, becoming sick, and dying, as these are permanent features of having a physical body. Even born in well-endowed and wealthy surroundings our mind will still have to confront suffering. This world is indeed full of suffering and happiness is elusive. Lord Buddha has contemplated all these possibilities, and no matter how high or how low a birth and in whatever world we might find ourselves, *dukkha* will be a companion day in and day out.

But basically it is *marāṇa* or death that is the greatest suffering of all. When that time arrives no human being wants to die, human beings want to escape from death, but escape is impossible. The best thing for us to do is to cultivate generosity, moral virtues, meditation, but with special emphasis on meditation. We have already performed giving and upheld

moral virtues, but meditation is an undertaking of particular importance. Only meditation will allow us to cut through the numerous obstacles along the way to circumvent the cycle of birth and death and attain deliverance from dukkha. Generosity, moral virtues as well as the Dhamma teachings of Lord Buddha can be compared to a raft, the raft that is used to transport us to the other side of a river. Once across the river we do not drag the raft along with us, we just walk up the river bank. Similarly as we practice meditation according to the Buddha's teachings, and according to the Dhamma that we have been studying that includes generosity, moral virtues, meditation, **the 8 Noble Eightfold Path, samādhi, wisdom, all these can be compared to the raft. But once we have reached the other side of the river we do not take the raft with us, we just let it go, there is no longer any need to talk about unrighteousness or even the righteousness of the Dhamma, there is no need to take all those things along with us to nibbāna.** We built the raft only in order to cross to the other side of the river and enter nibbāna to never return to the cycle of birth and death again.

But how do we go about attaining meditative calm (samādhi)? First of all we start with the act of giving, we all understand the act of giving alms in monks' bowls, we understand the act of making some sort of sacrifice for others such as looking after one's father and mother, these are sacrifices that we can make, these are all generous pursuits. To be respectful and humble

in front of elders is a means of building up goodness as well. Whereas moral virtues require us to control our physical actions and verbal actions, such as all of us lay disciples upholding the 5 precepts (sīla) that has been explained previously. Then there are those who uphold the 8 uposatha precepts that also require them to control their physical actions and verbal actions. Novices uphold 10 precepts whereas monks uphold 227 precepts. Considering generosity, moral virtues and meditation, it must be stressed yet again that meditation is the most important part among all three, but most of us do not seem interested in practicing meditation. Most of us are willing to make offerings and uphold the precepts, but when it comes to meditation we all seem to take a step back and give up. But then we also do not know how to go about it, and we do not seem to want to learn. If we do not know how to practice meditation but are willing to commit ourselves to study it then there is still hope. **But whenever meditative calm (samādhi) is mentioned then we all take a step back. But in reality it is not so difficult because it all rests upon us to do the practice, it does not come from outside of ourselves, its rests within our own mindfulness and wisdom. It rests within everyone's diligence in doing the practice.**

The method of practicing meditation is straightforward and simple to understand, and furthermore practicing meditation does not cost anything. The only thing that must be done is to set

our mind to be willing to confront our own mental defilements (kilesa). The practice of meditation itself is a heavy endeavor because it involves fighting against the mental defilements within our own mind. **Using the Dhamma to confront our own mind is not an easy task because our mind contains mental defilements that have dictated us for so many past lives, perhaps tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands or millions of our past lives. The defilements contain craving, anger, delusion that have dictated and controlled our mind. What we are trying to do is to use the Dhamma of Lord Buddha to unseat defilements, and climb on defilements' throne, and from one's mind be able to contemplate and see impermanence, un-satisfactoriness, and non-self (anicca, dukkha, anattā) as the three characteristics of existence.** See objects as something loathsome, filthy, impermanent, not-durable, see them according to impermanence, un-satisfactoriness, and non-self. To achieve the task of having Dhamma unseat mental defilements from one's mind is far from an easy task.

To achieve this Lord Buddha has introduced 40 different objects of contemplation (kammaṭṭhāna). We may choose one object of contemplation such as focusing mindfulness either on the Buddha, on the Dhamma, on the Saṅgha, on mindfulness of moral virtues, or on mindfulness of past good deeds, these are among some 10 objects of contemplation we can choose from

while sitting in meditation. When sitting in meditation we need to find a quiet place to sit. You remember just a moment ago, we heard sounds coming from outside, from the nearby village. Once there is a sound our concentration is disrupted, but sounds from animals seem to be fine, such as sounds from birds or crows or insects, mainly because we do not understand what these sounds mean or what these animals are doing, so the sounds of animals are ordinary and do not influence our meditation. Therefore when sitting in meditation **a quiet place is normally sought after such as in this monastery or any other monastery, or any other places, perhaps at a resort but it must be quiet, tranquil, remote, a place conducive to meditation, with lodgings that are adequate, but particularly quiet and tranquil for us to do the practice. Then we look for a remote place to sit in meditation.** Or we can stay and practice at home. In which case we may tell the members of our household to refrain from using the telephone or we can turn off all phones. When we sit in meditation there should be no sounds that can cause us to have feelings. We tell ourselves that we will not answer the telephone, and we turn the sound of the telephone off as we sit in meditation, once the sound is turned off the room we are sitting in will be quiet. The room we are in may or may not be air-conditioned but it must be remote from any sounds and we ought to be alone during the practice.

Let us now sit in meditation, place your right leg on top of the left,

your right hand on top of the left, sit erect, bring mindfulness in front of you. With your eyes closed focus on the breath while breathing in and breathing out, while breathing in think of the word “Bud”, while breathing out think of the word “Dho” so Buddho, Buddho, Buddho without allowing your thoughts to wander elsewhere. We all have always had thoughts ever since we were small and we still have thoughts as grown-ups. Let us now assess what benefits, if any, we have obtained from these thoughts as a result. But from now on we wish to create goodness, we are going to sit in meditation and will strive not to allow thoughts to appear for a full hour. We could ask ourselves what kind of loss will we incur by not thinking, or we could ask ourselves what will we gain instead by spending that hour just thinking. We must strive to find a reason so that our mind will understand what we are trying to do, we want to explain to our mind that we are trying to build goodness for ourselves, we are going to practice meditation. If we are not sharp and fast enough to catch our own thoughts as they start wandering, our mind will then wander off easily: thoughts will wander toward work to be done, or wander in miscellaneous directions, and our efforts spent at doing meditation will be of no avail. Hoping to spend 20 or 30 minutes doing meditation we end up really doing meditation for 5 to 7 minutes before giving up. But when watching television or videos or talking among ourselves we don’t mind how long it takes, we don’t feel it’s a waste of time. But when trying to do goodness we seem

to look at it as a waste of our time. The defilements within our mind have imposed themselves upon us, and have persuaded us to go along with activities that these defilements like, such as activities that may be improper, furthermore being pushed towards lowly pursuits is easy. Engaging in activities of higher pursuits such as prohibiting thoughts from wandering, and gain calmness while sitting in meditation requires a heavy effort. Combatting against defilements is no easy task, the combat is hard, probably very hard.

The practice of the Dhamma is therefore not a simple activity. It takes much effort to combat defilements within our own minds. But attaining only a basic level of meditative calmness (samādhī) will allow us to have an appreciation for the effort it takes. Even if we are sitting in meditation in the comfort of an air-conditioned room, if our own mind is not wholly committed we will not achieve results. Several practitioners have had to refine their mindfulness, their wisdom, their calmness even as they had to face difficulties within themselves such as while they were unwell. Some monks who eventually attained enlightenment and became arahant faced sickness and disease while doing the practice and were even expecting death to come calling, but then they turned to the knowing nature of their mind to look at themselves, not allowing their minds to wander outside of themselves, they looked inwardly to contemplate their

own physical bodies, and in the process let go and became arahant while they were in the midst of suffering. When suffering appears some practitioners' thoughts may go toward their children, their nephews and nieces or their friends and they may ask themselves why are they not here to help me, I have always helped others in my life, why is it that no-one is here to help me when I am suffering. These are all delirious ravings and thoughts aimed outside of our bodies. In such cases we can say that these practitioners have lost their balance and are stumbling. If they become seriously ill and face suffering, they should use their own intelligence and promptly focus upon themselves as object of contemplation. Their own intellect **can help them realize that this is my own kamma, having been born in this world this is what the end will be like, one cannot escape the death that awaits, whether help or no help is forthcoming I am bound to die, and someday whoever comes to my help will also die because no one can escape death. This is the way to contemplate within ourselves. Our mind will gain a moral boost, our mind will have an understanding of the law of cause and consequence, our mind will see the truth, it will let go of miscellaneous thoughts, of miscellaneous knowledge, of miscellaneous beliefs, the mind will be solely focused on the Dhamma. When practicing the Dhamma we will see the truth of whatever is being contemplated within our bodies and minds.**

Let us all look at our bodies starting with our **hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, and bones**. Let us contemplate the flesh, how does the flesh along our legs look like, how does the flesh along our arms look like, how does the flesh in our back look like. Let us imagine the flesh being removed and placed as heaps of flesh on the floor, each of the heaps is made up of flesh that resemble porc meat. Our body is also made up of flesh isn't it? Our body also has tendons and bones doesn't it? It also has a liver, kidneys, intestines, a stomach. It contains old food, it has large intestines, small intestines doesn't it? **As we see these things as they really are we start to realize that our bodies are made up of things that are of no substance. But our mind has attached itself onto those things. And we need to realize that one day all those things will break apart without fail. We are simply teaching ourselves, and when our mind accepts the truth then the mind will be repulsed by what it sees, and it will let go, it will no longer hold onto those things.**

When one no longer holds onto those things and lets go, the mind becomes free of defilements, the mind will let go of all defilements, one becomes arahant without intending to. Upon contemplation and reflection and seeing the reality of things then one lets go of everything, one no longer holds onto anything. One actually sees it from the perspective of wisdom,

one sees it from having taken the noble path and obtained results. Results can be seen very clearly. **When we think like ordinary people we will understand based only on our accumulated memories (saññā) but such understanding is not sufficiently profound. For example as ordinary people we see death and think about death, we see animals dying but how we internalize it is not sufficiently profound because we see these occurrences based on memories (saññā) and based on fabrications of the mind (saṅkhāra). But if we see these occurrences based on wisdom (paññā) then what we see is based on a true and thorough understanding. What we see through wisdom is very profound and is felt deeply into the mind to such an extent that it can allow us to let go of attachments. What we are able to realize through this new way of seeing is actually frightening, especially the fact that we realize that after we are born we must inevitably die. But then how come people go about enjoying themselves and have fun, why do people not spend their time accumulating good deeds, why are people so misguided by these joyful activities. When our mind knows according to the truth then the mind just lets go, lets go of many things, the mind then disengages itself automatically from defilements.**

I therefore urge every one of us to start doing the practice. As a first step to take we must sit in meditation. We are already familiar with making donations and abiding by moral virtues

(sīla), we must now sit in meditation in a quiet place every single day. One possible way is to take a nap in our home in the early evenings, then after the family has gone to bed and the house is silent we can now sit in meditation somewhere in the house and look at our own mind. We ought to follow this routine every single day without fail. If we can do this very regularly our mind will make progress continuously. The venerable meditation teachers have shown us the way and given us their advice, and we need to pick out the main points of their teachings. If we have never done the practice, it will be difficult to understand their teachings, we will not know what meditative calm (samādhi) feels like, we will not know what wisdom feels like. But if we study and do the practice, when the meditation teachers talk about moral virtues we will understand, when they talk about samādhi we will understand, we will know what the mind does during samādhi, our mind will experience wisdom, during contemplation of dhamma objects the mind will know exactly what is being let go of.

I urge every one of us to continue performing meritorious deeds and remain diligent. One day each of us will reach the end of our life for sure. **When we do reach the end of our physical lives we will not fall into nothingness, our soul will definitively be reborn. As our departing spirit is taken to be reborn we cannot ensure what will take over our soul at that moment. If we have practiced mindfulness and**

attained wisdom, our good deeds will take us toward realms of happiness even though we are not yet entirely free from suffering. But if we have not practiced mindfulness or have not prepared ourselves then the bad deeds we have committed will come forth and take us to realms of suffering. When that time comes no one can come to our rescue, the sages say *attā hi attanō nāthō*, meaning “You can rely only on yourself” and *kō hi nāthō parō siyā*, meaning “Ask yourself who can you depend on among all other people?”; it befalls only upon us to protect ourselves.

Our parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives and friends, and our closest friends can only help us up to a certain level. But every one of us will eventually leave in different directions. We must think about this point, we must build our own meritorious deeds, we need not worry or feel sorrowful about others. Others may have dissuaded us from performing good deeds, but let us not listen to others too much as we all have performed past deeds that are different from one another. At birth we arrived alone, when we die we will go on alone, no one will accompany us. At birth besides arriving alone what did we bring with us, we came begging for life without a single piece of cloth on us. After we die someone may place a coin in our mouth, all the money we had will go elsewhere, even our own bones we cannot take with us. **With the exception of our soul we arrived with, we will leave**

as we have arrived. So why are we so misled and so obsessed with the material world, let us let go of those attachments, let us not allow our mind to be so overly obsessed. Instead let us all build meritorious deeds and be very diligent. Then one day we will all reach a realm free from suffering, a realm full of bliss, where we will no longer need to endure the cycle of birth and rebirth ever again. I have spoken long enough.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE PRACTICE TO ATTAIN SAMĀDHI



A Dhamma Talk given
by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako
to Monks and Lay Devotees on 4 June 2012,
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province

All of us have been busy ever since early morning, all of you have made offerings (dāna) and have vowed acceptance to the five precepts, and just this evening the monks held a religious service to chant the fundamental precepts. Then together we paid homage to Lord Buddha, and we mentioned Visākha Pūjā day. According to what we have read in the Pali language and translated into the Thai language **it is understood that today is Visākha Pūjā day, the day Lord Buddha was born, the day Lord Buddha achieved enlightenment, and the day Lord Buddha passed away and entered nibbāna.** And then all of us recited the evening prayers a short while ago.

I will now give a presentation about the story of Lord Buddha on this important occasion that commemorates his birth, his enlightenment, his passing away and his entry into nibbāna. Many of the lay devotees present today probably know the importance of this day, some may have come only recently and could learn something from this presentation. For those who are already aware of this day's importance, but may not be familiar with or understand some of the details, this presentation may help clarify some points. **Concerning the Dhamma attained during his enlightenment Lord Buddha pronounced that upon hearing the Dhamma some will hear certain aspects they have never heard before, certain aspects previously heard but never fully understood will be understood with greater clarity, certain aspects may answer questions**

lingering in some peoples' minds, and then listening to the Dhamma can allow the listener to gain proper perspectives. Listening to the explanation of the principle of cause and consequence can be invigorating. In the scriptures written in the pali language the following terms are defined: *sutamayapaññā* refers to knowledge obtained from listening to others, *cintamayapaññā* refers to knowledge obtained from deep reflection, examination, and pondering of words heard from others and then undergoing a final review leading to knowledge, *bhāvanāmayapaññā* or knowledge obtained from the meditation practice by bringing our mind into a state of tranquility and concentration where the mind is focused solely on a single point and absolutely still, and then allow the mind in such a state of concentration to scrutinize and examine the causes and consequences that lead to finer levels of knowledge.

But the first step is to listen to the spoken word. Without listening to someone with experience and wisdom give explanations it is not possible to become knowledgeable and well rounded on the subject. Those of us who enter a monastery for the first time must rely on what one hears. Being expected to study and do research on the Tipiṭaka or in books on our own is unrealistic. Even Buddhist monks who study the Tipiṭaka often do not understand some words or sentences used as the writings are similar to the legal language. The Tipiṭaka uses ancient ways of writing sentences, with some

words coming from the pali language, and after trying to read just a few words most of us would be incapable to understand and give up. Therefore asking each of us to read and do research on the Tipiṭaka on our own is unrealistic.

After I ordained and entered a Buddhist monastery I studied the Tipiṭaka. One of the goals I had in mind in these studies was to be able to explain selected parts of Lord Buddha's teachings for disciples, especially young disciples, to understand. **The basic Dhamma teachings of Lord Buddha can be found in 84,000 collective bodies of laws divided into baskets, groups, categories, or collections. One of these baskets comprises the set of regulations for monks to abide by called vinaya. Another basket comprises the sutta or the stories of individual monks, individual disciples, individual male or female lay followers spanning different periods. The third and final basket comprises a set of special sutta or paramattha dhamma that deals with the inner workings of the mind: how does the mind think, how does the mind fabricate thoughts, how does the mind form opinions, how is mindfulness used to look at the mind itself, these are all called paramattha dhamma. All these deal with the study of the dynamics of the mind and how the thought processes of the mind functions.**

Tipiṭaka refers to 3 Piṭaka meaning 3 baskets (or 3 sets) of manuscripts. But for us to study these manuscripts to see the

truth and achieve wisdom contained therein is extremely difficult. As Buddhists we belong to one of four Buddhist communities (bhikkhus, bhikkhunīs, laymen and laywomen devotees). It can be compared to being stakeholders in a company that has a manager, deputy managers, customers, employees. The Buddha may be considered the owner and manager of the company and as disciples of the Buddha we are like the investors or stakeholders in the Company. Venerable Moggallāna and Venerable Sariputra may be considered deputy managers, Venerable Ananda may be considered the corporate secretary who records the operation of the company. **Therefore all of us form the Buddhist communities (the stakeholders) and we have invested in the Company that belongs to the Buddha by purchasing shares or investing with the Buddha, and we are all in agreement with the Buddha, the major owner of the company, who has pronounced the 84,000 collective bodies of laws, explaining that actions such as dāna where selflessness or self-sacrifice must be backed by logic. For example if we happen to live in a community where no one makes self-sacrifices for the sake of others, where no one shares what one has with others, where no one has consideration for others, then no one in such a community that may include the entire world will lead happy lives, and mistrust among people will prevail.** Why would this be the case? Since we are not considerate toward others, if we have no kindness toward others, if we never forgive people by learning the art of

forgiveness, if we never lend a helping hand, we simply would be unable to live together. Lord Buddha therefore pronounced that for all of us to be able to live together there needs to be selflessness and self-sacrifice, there must be dāna meaning the act of giving.

If we consider, reflect, and scrutinize the Dhamma teachings of Lord Buddha, based on causes and consequences, the teachings follow a logic and are rational. Lord Buddha has pronounced these teachings based on the wisdom he has attained, based on the knowledge and insight he has acquired. These teachings of the Dhamma are perfect and unassailable in their entirety. It is difficult to find anyone who would seriously object to them, those who choose to object will do so only with bullheadedness. When asked to go into details no one can realistically challenge the teachings of Lord Buddha. The topic of sīla (the precepts) deals with rules of civility for those who live in a society or in a community. If people without virtues live together then there is no longer any trust among people, there exist only mistrust and suspicion and it becomes impossible to find peacefulness and happiness in one's life in the midst of people not abiding by sīla. On the other hand if every one of us upholds the precepts wherever we go we will gain the trust of people. But by not upholding the precepts and by only looking to take advantage of people or are waiting to harm and hurt people

then think about it, wherever we go we will find people to be on their guard and take precautions against everyone coming near them. Happiness and peacefulness will be impossible to find. If we analyse the issue of morality that Lord Buddha has mentioned with reason and logic, the only way lies on the basis of Lord Buddha's Dhamma teachings.

In addition Lord Buddha mentioned meditative calmness (samādhī), wisdom, charity, moral behavior and meditation. One type of meditation involves the practice of samādhī to calm the mind. Devoid of calmness the mind fabricates fanciful thoughts instead of looking within oneself, the mind will then experience anxiety and worry, such anxious thoughts can lead the mind to go astray. Do not believe for a second that these thoughts will lead to anything productive, it will only contain hearsay good only for idle conversation. The reason for this is because these thoughts were fabricated when we lacked mindfulness within ourselves. Be careful because such thoughts can even cause some people to lose their mind. Why could that be so? Because we do not have *sati sampajañña* (meaning mindfulness as well as self-awareness) of what one does. **Therefore Lord Buddha proposed and taught several methods to attain mindfulness. Mindfulness is a skill necessary and most importantly mindfulness forms the basis of Buddhism. As we train ourselves to attain calmness of mind we must have mindfulness and self-awareness. Lord Buddha mentioned**

this point ever since he attained enlightenment. And today which is the anniversary of the day he attained enlightenment. Lord Buddha recalled that on that momentous evening before nightfall he sat in meditation, his right leg on top of his left, his right hand on top of his left, his back straight, he firmly decided to be mindful of inhaling when breathing in, to be mindful of exhaling when breathing out, keeping mindfulness and self-awareness (sati sampajañña) on the breath in and out. From then on the Buddha's mind became calmer and calmer until the focus of his concentration became One.

This is one method to train our mindfulness. With proper training our mindfulness will not sway, the mind will be steady and tranquil, the mind will then come together and descend into calmness. At that stage the mind no longer thinks about the past or the future, the mind will be in the present at this very moment, it will be in the here and now, the here and now, always in the here and now. When the mind is in the here and now it will descend into calmness, descending into calmness the mind will come together and become One. The mind will become still, and will be able to rest. The mind rests into calmness in stages: *khaṇika samādhī*, *upacāra samādhī*, *appanā samādhī*. After resting in *appāna samadhi* for a sufficient period and having gained strength, the mind will come out of that state of concentration. After having achieved stillness of the mind some practitioners often want to continue enjoying

stillness. This is similar to a person who after having rested wishes to continue to rest. This is equivalent to someone never having been in an air-conditioned room, but once having tasted the coolness and comfort of the room, once that person leaves the air-conditioned room he wants to go back in. We no longer want to go out to perform other work because work is difficult, causes hardship and is physically taxing. We all know the difference between working and relaxing in an air-conditioned room. Our mind works the same way. When our mind comes together to become One our mind feels just like we are relaxing in an air-conditioned room. But then if after having rested we decide not go back to work but keep on relaxing, then how are we to obtain work results, there will be no work results. Or in other words we will not see the truth of the Dhamma. Even a wealthy person can become poor and destitute this way, if he chooses not to go out and work.

Doing meditation to gain clear intuitive insight through contemplation is similar to going to work. Doing meditation to attain tranquility of mind (samādhi) to allow the mind to become One is like seeking a resting place for the mind. Whereas doing vipassanā meditation to gain intuitive insight involves thinking, considering and investigating causes and consequences. But what does Lord Buddha want practitioners to consider and investigate? Lord Buddha made the pronouncement that what can be seen clearly on the outside

are the five kammaṭṭhāna that he determined should be the objects of contemplation. Every time a novice or a monk is ordained he will be given the five kammaṭṭhāna. **What are the five kammaṭṭhāna? They are hair (kesā), body hair (lomā), nails (nakhā), teeth (dantā), and skin (taco), these are known as the five kammaṭṭhāna.** The five kammaṭṭhāna cannot be disregarded by those doing vipassana or by those taking the path leading to the cessation of suffering. Samādhi is used as a tool to calm the mind. But when the mind has already gone beyond samādhi and calmness then the mind now can and must practice vipassanā meditation **which involves contemplation through consideration and investigation of causes and consequences such as what is the true nature of hair, bodily hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones based on the physical reality of what they are.**

When we see things according to the physical reality of what they are our mind will understand that our physical body is not the same as who we are. The mind and the physical body reside together but they are not one and the same. The mind that has gone beyond samādhi, that has rested, that has attained calmness and become One, is now endowed with the capacity to know by itself **that body and mind are different from each other but only reside together.** When we realize this point we can now make use of the mind that knows to contemplate our physical body and ask itself how long

this body will be able to remain as it is, because this body as it stands will naturally require something to sustain itself, so food is provided, air is provided, the four elements of earth-water-air-fire will be provided to sustain the body. This is similar to looking after a tree, we must have water and fertilizers, we do not place the tree too much in the shade or too much exposed to direct sunshine. This is how we take care of a tree sapling to allow it to grow into a full-grown tree. Similarly the mind is like the owner observing the body, is it hot or is it cold, how hungry and how thirsty is it, there is a need to satiate the body with what it needs, but some may over-indulge the body to the point that one is misled by the body in seeing the body as entirely ourselves.

Had we not studied the foundation of the Dhamma based on the teachings of Lord Buddha all of us would still be obsessed with our body because we take it for granted that our body belongs to us. **Lord Buddha contemplated on this point while meditating at the base of the bhodi tree, and said categorically that the body is not us. Let us reflect on and scrutinize this point carefully. If indeed the body is ours we ought to be able to tell the body not to grow old, not to fall sick, not to die, or to remain as it is forever, and the body would obey. But this is not the case.** When it is time for it to grow old it grows old by itself, when it is time for it to become sick it becomes sick by itself, when it is time for it to die it just

dies. No one can avoid any of those. This indeed shows that the body is not us.

Let us now turn our consideration to the mind as in any discussions related to the principles of Buddhism we cannot escape from talking about the mind. It is like talking about the various parts of a tree without mentioning the primary root, we can talk on and on and make all sorts of presentations about other parts of a tree, but in reality the most important part of a tree is its primary root. If the primary root penetrates the soil deep enough then the tree can sustain itself. The mind plays a similar role. Consideration must be given to the primary root and likewise consideration must be given to the mind. Do not allow the mind to be overly obsessed with the body. Of course we must look after the body properly, but then we will eventually meet with suffering. Giving the best care to the body without fault is impossible to attain because one day, no matter how well the body is being taken care of, this body will be external to us, the body does not belong to us. This is what Lord Buddha teaches.

Therefore we must analyse, scrutinize, investigate the Dhamma of Lord Buddha based on causes and consequences. **And after such scrutiny and investigation we will attain our own insight that the body is only one element and should not be closely held onto. But before reaching such a stage of**

understanding, and before we can let go of that particular attachment, we must have already attained meditative calmness (samādhī). If our mind has not yet attained samādhī, it will be difficult for us to grasp this point. We must not dismiss the power of samādhī. To attain samādhī we must train our mind again and again.

What does training the mind to attain samādhī mean? When we sit down and rest as part of our daily life, without our body moving, we may be unsure what to focus on, there is only the knowing, and then as our mind wanders we tend to fall asleep, we forget what to focus on because our body is still. But when we sit this way one thing we can follow is the sound of breathing in and breathing out “fod faad, fod faad” caused by the flow of air. **For this reason meditation masters suggest that practitioners wishing to calm their minds follow the breath by silently reciting the term Bud while breathing in and Dho while breathing out, without paying importance to the term, just to enable mindfulness to stay with this particular kammaṭṭhāna, which is more important than understanding the meaning of the terms used.** A different exercise may involve reciting silently the term Buddhō while breathing in and Buddhō while breathing out, then Dhammō while breathing in and Dhammō while breathing out, and then Saṅgho while breathing in and Saṅgho while breathing out. Another exercise may involve reciting silently the term Buddhō

while breathing in and then Dhammo while breathing out. It all depends what recitation, or mantra, we wish our mindfulness to follow. **But the most important point is to have mindfulness during the exercise, whatever recitation word we choose we must maintain our mindfulness throughout the exercise. Mindfulness is located at the recitation words chosen, do not become negligent, do not let mindfulness slip while reciting the words silently, have sati or mindfulness as well as sampajañña or self-awareness to control the process.** Sati means being able to remember, sampajañña means being aware all the time that we are determined to focus on the air being breathed-in and breathed-out. As our mindfulness is focused there, when our mindfulness has enough strength, our mind will come together and attain calmness.

But attaining calmness is no easy task, it is easy to talk about it, but when one starts sitting in meditation it is another matter. **Practitioners will realize by themselves the difficulties once they start doing the practice in the sitting posture, they will find that the mind will veer-off in this direction, then in that direction, but whatever the mind fabricates we will strive to bring the mind back to the original kammaṭṭhāna. Whenever the mind veers-off again we just bring it back to the original kammaṭṭhāna again.** We bring it back to the kammaṭṭhāna Buddho if we have chosen Buddho as the recitation word, such as Bud when breathing in and Dho when

breathing out, or if our chosen recitation word is Buddhō when breathing in and Buddhō when breathing out. Just let mindfulness come back to the kammaṭṭhāna we had started with. This is the way to start developing our mindfulness.

When doing walking meditation placing one leg in front of the other creates movement whereas, as I have said earlier, in the sitting meditation posture there are no movements, there is only air passing through our nostrils in and out with our breath, and we focus our mindfulness on the passage of air in and out through our nostrils. **But in walking meditation when we step out with the right leg we focus our mindfulness on the leg that is moving, as the right leg moves we recite the word Bud then as the left leg moves we recite Dho so Buddhō, Buddhō while walking. But we must do so with mindfulness, we must have a strong resolve to maintain mindfulness while walking.** So we walk Bud with the right leg and Dho with the left, so Buddhō, Buddhō. When we turn to walk back we can either turn left or turn right but we ought to turn in the clockwise direction. Once we have turned, our first step is taken with the right leg Bud with the left leg Dho, Buddhō, Buddhō. Then arriving at the end of the walking meditation path we turn clockwise again right leg Bud, left leg Dho again.

This is one way to practice mindfulness, but to practice mindfulness we must practice continually, with mindfulness

staying with us permanently and not stray to the outside, practicing this way the mind will come together, it will come together little by little until the mind calms down and becomes One. But the time it takes for the mind to calm down and become One we cannot say, it depends on our intent, our determination, our diligence. This all depends on the individual, some meditate by reciting Buddhō, Buddhō once or twice and then forget what they are doing, some forget what they are doing completely. Before going to sleep at night we might sit in meditation, but then our thoughts go in whatever direction we do not know, our mind has gone wherever we do not know. And then as we are about to go to sleep we ask ourselves but wasn't I sitting in meditation just a while ago? This is a clear indication that mindfulness has lapsed.

While sitting in meditation to attain calmness of mind we must set our mindfulness firmly, we must force it to stay. We cannot let it be by itself unaided, we cannot just passively let it be by itself, we must compel it. We must force it to work like forcing our children or grand-children to go to school and study. What child would ever volunteer to go to school unless that particular child is especially hard working, the majority will only cling to their father or mother. But as adults we all know the benefits of education for children, that is to prepare them for their lives as adults, they will gain knowledge and skills that will help them make a living as adults. Therefore we have

no choice but to force them to study because as adults we know that education is a necessity. It is similar in this case, in the case of our mind we want our mind to become interested in sitting in meditation but doing so abruptly is very difficult because the defilements do not like it. But we must try to find a way to induce our mind to do the practice to allow it to attain calmness and become One. Then once we have seen the benefit of the mind attaining calmness and becoming One our mind will feel cool, comfortable, happy. Once we have seen the value of calmness of mind then diligence in the practice will come automatically. We will then become attached to the practice. Whenever we do not sit in meditation we will feel that something is missing in our life. So we must strive to sit in meditation every single day without fail. Why would that be so? Because sitting in meditation brings comfort and happiness to the mind. At least we will be able to observe and get to know our mind, know and see what thoughts our mind fabricates as we sit in meditation.

For this reason all of us lay devotees should strive to do the practice to achieve samādhi. Can we do the practice at home? Yes you can but it is not the same as practicing in a peaceful and utterly tranquil place. If the practice can be done by staying home, the Venerable meditation teachers would not have carried their umbrella-tents with their alms-bowls accross their shoulders into remote forests to

meditate. Planting their umbrella-tents in the ground and sit in them in meditation in busy communities are not the ways of monks who walk dhutanga. They will seek peaceful, utterly tranquil and silent places, such as a funerary ground, a cave, a virgin forest, a dense thicket of trees, whatever is remote to find peace. They would then sit in meditation in such places. By meditating in funerary grounds or cemeteries or other places that instill fear, the mind is not likely to send out thoughts, the mind is not likely to stray away, mindfulness will stay within oneself. The mind may fear ghosts or whatever else, and when the mind experiences fear mindfulness will stay within oneself, as the practitioner recites Buddhō, Buddhō...

Lay devotees, the practice of meditation is your responsibility as well, it is not the sole responsibility of monks. Monks seek tranquility, peacefulness, happiness while searching for a way to end suffering. But for all of us, we also seek tranquility, peacefulness, and happiness. Everyone seeks happiness, who would ever seek unhappiness? Thinking or dreaming up things too much can result in headaches, sleeplessness, and can cause nervous breakdowns. Why would that be? Because we think too much, we are very proficient at thinking, but there are ways to attain calmness just the same. If we practice samādhī we would know what to do both ways, we can then either allow the mind to think or allow the mind to attain calmness. We can then manage either way.

As mentioned earlier, today is a most important day in Buddhism, it is the day when Lord Buddha was born, the day he achieved enlightenment, the day he entered nibbāna. He achieved enlightenment on this day just before dawn and became the Buddha (Phra anuttara samma sambhotiyan or He who is unsurpassed, He who has achieved enlightenment the proper way through his own wisdom). From then on he announced and disseminated the Dhamma, a Dhamma that has come down to all of us going back 2,555 years ago. This marks 2,555 years that the Buddha achieved enlightenment at the age of 35. This very day when he achieved enlightenment is referred to as Buddhachayanti which marks exactly 2600 years ever since the Buddha achieved enlightenment. Calculations indicate that this occurred 2,600 years ago exactly.

It is well accepted that today is a most important day, and this year is a most important year as well. **All of us especially monks, and particularly younger monks, should take the occasion to be indefatigable in their practice such as staying awake and sit in meditation the whole night.** Do try walking in meditation all night, even though you may not sit or walk the entire time but try not to sleep, or you can try changing your meditation posture from standing, walking, sitting, lying down or alternate between those postures. While doing meditation with perseverance do use strong measures at times, but also softer measures at other times. Always repeating the same old

meditation routine is not recommended as it is not inspiring, try to modify your practice routine. But do not talk with one another, talking to others creates emotions. When strongly focused on the practice avoid being near anyone, avoid people. In our monastery you can always place two tree branches parallel to one another along a road, light candles on both sides of the impromptu path and then walk in meditation. There are many such places here where road lengths are substantial. Try to avoid always walking in meditation along the same path, similarly with sitting meditation try to avoid sitting in your room too much as it can make you feel confined and easily become drowsy. We must sit where the air can flow, we must seek our own way, find places appropriate for us.

If each of us tries to find the best way to go forward for ourselves then one day our mind will attain calmness and coolness according to Lord Buddha’s pronouncement *Natthi Santiparam Sukham* meaning “Contentment greater than the mind attaining calmness does not exist”.

All of what we see and experience are myriads of fabrications from the mind which all result in adversity and suffering. If the mind is bogged down with too many fabrications then misery and suffering will be the end result. Those who think too much are miserable. Most of us have never experienced our mind becoming calm and still, but if all of us decide to become serious in our practice then it is possible to experience it by oneself.

The Buddha, and all the meditation teachers have already experienced calmness of mind, and the mind becoming One and they can attest to it. **But all of us have not yet savored that experience as our mind has never attained such calmness with the mind becoming One, but we need to persevere. Once we have tasted the flavor of the Dhamma and the flavor of samādhī the experience will remain deeply etched within ourselves and we will be convinced in the truth of the Dhamma, the teachings of Lord Buddha. Our conviction will remain anchored in our mind and will be unwavering because we have experienced the truth by ourselves.** But if our mind has not yet experienced calmness we will continue to be unsure and have swings in viewpoints, only half believing what is being said. Possibly we can easily decide to abandon our practice. Why would that be? Because we have never tasted samādhī, a teaching of Lord Buddha.

Today I have given a talk for the benefit of all lay persons, and before ending I would like to ask that the virtues of the Triple Gems, of the Buddha, of the Dhamma, of the Saṅgha, and all that is sacred in the world protect all of you. I wish that you all meet with happiness, with prosperity, with cool-headedness, that your desires within the bounds of good morals be accorded, and that the wishes that you hope for will be obtained.



*Lord Buddha has once said
in praising the benefit of practicing the Dhamma according
with the Dhamma*

***“Dhamma his dwelling,
Dhamma his delight,
A monk pondering Dhamma,
Calling Dhamma to mind,
doesn’t fall away
from the Dhamma.
Whether walking,
standing,
sitting, or
lying down
-his mind inwardly restrained-
he arrives
right at peace.”***

THE BASICS OF SAMATHA MEDITATION



A Dhamma Talk given
by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako
to Monks and Lay Devotees on 23 August 2013,
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province

I will now give an introduction to meditation (bhāvanā) for those who are interested in practicing the Dhamma. Today I see that there are lay devotees who have come to abide by the precepts (sīla) at the monastery, and it feels very comforting. This afternoon I received the visit of a group of monks from monasteries in nearby Nam Som and Na Yung Districts who were paying their respects to senior monks in several other monasteries in Na Yung District according to tradition. I gave them and their lay followers a talk of some length on the Dhamma. As a result this evening I will talk less, I will only give a short introduction to all of you lay devotees and the newly ordained monks, then we will listen to a taped sermon I have given on a special occasion that contains important points worthy to be listened to, and worthy of future studies.

Today has been a busy day since early this morning as mentioned. I am not a machine and my health is not quite suited to such activities. **But I am concerned about the young monks, especially the newly ordained monks in this monastery. I would like for them, as well as the lay devotees, and those who come to the monastery to abide by sīla on Buddhist holy days during and outside of the vassa (the rains retreat or phansa in Thai), to listen to and learn as much as possible about the foundations of Lord Buddha's Dhamma teachings.** Among those present today are a group of faithful who have great belief in Buddhism and the teachings of Lord Buddha,

but they also have had responsibilities to shoulder and work to be done in the past, and have been mostly away from the monastery outside the vassa. But during this year's vassa they have all paid special attention and have attended more often than in the past. This year it appears that lay devotees have come in greater number and their presence makes the environment feel warmer than in past years. But in any case I would urge all lay devotees to especially devote yourselves to perform meritorious deeds during this vassa on Buddhist days on the 8th and 15th days of the waning and waxing moon that total only 12 days in the vassa without fail. Try to find time to attend and practice the Dhamma on those days. People may feel that I am thinking about myself and this monastery, but all I want is for all lay devotees to practice the Dhamma particularly seriously in this monastery, not for the good name of the monastery, not for the sake of the monastery, not for the good fortune of the monastery, and not for titles that may come to the monastery. In reality I am not looking forward to such outcomes, but all I wish for is that each and every one of the lay devotees come to practice the Dhamma for their own prosperity.

Some of us are Buddhists by tradition, some because they believe that Lord Buddha is their supreme teacher, some because they practice the Dhamma as bhikkhus, bhikkunīs, nuns, laymen and laywomen. After we have studied the Dhamma and have done the practice, such as myself for example who

have done the practice ever since ordaining as a novice, I can attest without hesitation that all the elements of the Dhamma which are the teachings of Lord Buddha are perfect and unassailable in their entirety and can be practiced to obtain results that are highly comforting to the mind and reinforce the faith in the Dhamma. The practice of the Dhamma does not disturb, does not impose upon or maltreat others, the practice is aimed at attaining calmness and peacefulness for oneself and all members of one's family and friends. **If we all abide by the code of morality wherever we go we will meet with peacefulness and happiness. I would like to ask all of us lay followers who can hear me to listen to my recommendations and encouragement that all of us behave as persons who mean well, act well, speak well, and abide by proper moral behavior. Once all of you abide by proper moral behavior I do not wish anything more than that because it is like pointing to all of you lay followers the way to the riches.**

For the young people who are present today I recommend you to behave and practice the way I have explained. It is like you are developing a business and are told that this way is the only way you can become wealthy. So young people after you go into business and become wealthy with enough money to spend, and one day you might even say that had I not listened to Luang Por Inthawai I probably would not have been able to earn enough to sustain myself and my family. Similarly

Luang Por is recommending to all his disciples to give dāna, and while living in the midst of other people to conduct bodily actions, speech, and mind within the sīla for their own protection and safety, and to practice meditation so that their mind would then be able to achieve calmness, peace and happiness. If your mind can achieve calmness you will understand Lord Buddha's Dhamma teaching that says *Natthi Santiparam Sukham* (there exists no greater feeling of happiness than calmness), and you are bound to experience a feeling of profound happiness. If all of you experience calmness of the mind, you will savor a feeling of happiness. Luang Por will not have the privilege to enjoy any part of your happiness as you are the ones who have done the practice and experienced the truth of the Dhamma by yourselves.

The reason for which Luang Por is very willing to show the way for all of us to practice is because in the past Luang Por has received instructions from Luang Poo, Luang Ta, and many other meditation teachers such as Luang Poo Waen (Venerable Ācariya Waen Sujinno of Doi Mae Pang Monastery in Chiangmai), Luang Ta Maha Boowa (Venerable Ācariya Maha Boowa Ñāṇasampanno of Baan Tad Forest Monastery in Udon Thani), Luang Poo Cham (Venerable Ācariya Cham Mahapunyo of Wiwake Wattanaram Monastery in Mukdaharn), Luang Poo La (Venerable Ācariya La Khemapatto of Banpot Kiri Monastery in

Mukdaharn), all of whom Luang Por has spent many vassa with. From then I did research from books of the Tipiṭaka, from the Dhamma teachings of meditation teachers, from the biographies of various meditation teachers. And then I did the practice, and I became convinced in the Dhamma teachings of Lord Buddha, and convinced in the teachings and guidance of the meditation teachers. And I have disseminated these Dhamma teachings to lay followers and all of you young people so that you can do the practice. Once you have practiced these Dhamma teachings the fruits of the practice will all be your own.

This is what I wanted you to understand. However even though Luang Por has given you all this information but all of you must use your individual judgement to further your studies on the matter. Having heard my explanations all of you should scrutinize and examine the logic of what you have heard. Do not simply believe everything that you hear from Luang Por. I repeat that all of you should ponder, reflect, scrutinize and examine the logic of the explanations. And from then on get down to do the practice itself. Once each of you have started the actual practice your belief will be reinforced within yourself, the fruits of the practice will become apparent within yourself and belief will be automatic, a deep belief within yourself. This is not an issue of hearing and then believing, such shallow beliefs do not go deep to the core

of yourself, it is like planting a wooden pole into muddy soil and then see it fall over. But if belief is based on insight and knowledge and backed by endurance and persistence all of you will gain a strong faith in the Dhamma teachings of Lord Buddha. These Dhamma teachings are all mentioned in the Tipiṭaka.

The Buddha once asked the following question to Venerable Sariputra “Sariputra, what I the Tathagata has announced to you, has told you, do you believe this to be true?” thereupon Venerable Sariputra replied “Not yet Lord, because I have not yet practiced those teachings. After I have practiced these teachings I will answer this question later on”. **These words are in the Dhamma teachings of the Buddha who said that it does not mean that whatever the Buddha announces one should completely believe, logic must come first before belief and has to be followed by the practice. But if after having listened we reject it (the Dhamma teachings) outright then it can be said that this is a case of foolishness. Why would that be the case? because it is like closing our ears, closing our eyes, and not listening to anyone. Another case of foolishness is after having listened the listener believes in everything that has been said.** Because all of us have been educated in both the lay education system and in the context of the Buddhist Dhamma, but having listened to both contexts and after reflection, scrutiny, and investigation of the causes and

consequences of what was said will result in greater wisdom for all of us. This is because the Dhamma of Lord Buddha is perfect and unassailable in its entirety.

Such as meditative calm (samādhi) for instance, Lord Buddha has taught us to sit in meditation to attain samādhi and calm our mind. Once the mind has achieved calmness we shall know by ourselves the difference between body and mind. The mind and the body are completely different entities. It can be seen very clearly if we imagine the body being the body of a car, the mind being the driver. But the basis of Lord Buddha's Dhamma teachings gives importance to the driver (the mind) rather than to the car (the body). This is the essence of the following Buddhist saying *Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā, mano setṭhā manomayā* (In all things the mind is the most important, the mind is the leader, everything to be achieved is achieved by the mind). The meaning is that in this car the driver is the most important, the driver is the leader, whatever the driver decides to do the driver can do, wherever the car goes depends on the driver because the car if left by itself will stay there and be left to remain under the sun or in the rain if the driver does not park it in the shade. The same is true when we say that the mind is the master, the body is subservient to the mind. Therefore all of us who are Buddhist lay followers, and all the young people present here, do strive in your study of samādhi and on

how to attain calmness. When sitting in the samādhi posture to calm the mind we place our right leg on top of the left as shown by looking at the main Buddha statue. We then bring our palms together between our chest and we pay homage to past teachers because the Dhamma teachings on how to sit in samādhi is not something that Luang Por has created, it is not something that Luang Poo Mun (Venerable Ācariya Mun Bhūridatta Thera) has created, it is not something that Luang Ta Maha Bua has created, it is the creation of Lord Buddha the supreme teacher.

The Buddha has attained enlightenment, the highest and most perfect awakening, beyond which there exists no superior knowledge. Lord Buddha then explained and taught the method of sitting in samādhi. It is the reason that before we practice samādhi we pay our respects to Lord Buddha our teacher by placing our palms in front of our chest and repeat Buddhō, Dhammo, Saṅgho three times then bring our hands down. This is how we pay respect to Lord Buddha, our supreme teacher who has attained enlightenment of the Dhamma beyond which there exists no superior knowledge. The Buddha has already practiced the right way which has already shown results. After the Buddha achieved enlightenment he disseminated these teachings of the Dhamma, and created a curriculum that he used to teach his disciples with. As these monks listened to sermons of the Buddha, they applied these teachings while listening, they

practiced in the moment and obtained results as they listened. Thereafter these monks in their turn passed on these teachings to other generations starting some 2556 years ago until these teachings have now reached us. We therefore must think about the benevolence of Lord Buddha, of the Dhamma, and of the Saṅgha, those to whom we are so indebted. This is how we pay respects to our past teachers: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, so Buddhō, Dhammo, Saṅgho. We can now lower our hands.

Let us now have the following thoughts “I wish to be happy, I wish all souls and all beings in the three worlds be able to enjoy the happiness that I wish for myself”. Let us make this wish silently in our mind. We can then bring our hands down and focus on the breath while breathing in and recite internally Bud, while breathing out Dho. **In the practice as taught by Luang Poo Mun the word Buddhō was introduced in addition to focusing on the breath as taught by Lord Buddha. As the Buddha sat under the bodhi tree he only focused on the breath while breathing in, knowing that he was breathing in, focused on the breath while breathing out, knowing that he was breathing out, maintaining mindfulness in the breathing in and out. But Luang Poo Mun made an adaptation by introducing the word Buddhō basically using two kammaṭṭhāna simultaneously and having the practitioner focus on the breathing in and out as well as reciting Buddhō,**

Bud while breathing in and Dho while breathing out, so Buddho, Buddho.... By focusing solely on the in and out breathing mindfulness can slip away quickly, we can forget what we are doing quickly, we can stray easily, mindfulness can slip quickly, this can be remedied by reciting an incantation simultaneously. This is what Luang Poo Mun suggested and this is how he taught his numerous disciples, and he had many disciples such as Luang Ta Maha Boowa, Luang Poo Tes (Venerable Ācariya Tes Tesrangsri of Hin Mak Peng Monastery in Nongkhai), Luang Poo Kao (Venerable Ācariya Khao Analayo of Tham Klong Phen Monastery in Nong Bua Lamphu), Luang Poo Fan (Venerable Ācariya Fan Ajaro of Udomsomporn Forest Monastery in Sakon Nakhon), and Luang Poo La. These meditation teachers all used the *kammaṭṭhāna* introduced by Luang Poo Mun, and those meditation teachers relayed this method to all of us.

Luang Por has studied under a number of meditation teachers and is now relaying this method to all of us lay followers because this is the way Luang Por has practiced and achieved calmness of mind. Do use this method in your practice, do try this method by yourself, do sit in meditation and see. **Focus using this method and see what happens, when the mind has reached calmness, the meditation teachers ensure that you will experience *Natthi Santiparam Sukham* (Happiness beyond calmness of the mind does not exist) as Lord Buddha**

has rightly pronounced. If mindfulness slips away from the focus on the breath in and out when focusing solely on the breath let us intensify the focus by reciting internally the word Bud while breathing in, and Dho while breathing out, Buddho, Buddho, Buddho. Luang Por would like to add the following exercise: by counting 1, 2, 3,.. when breathing in count 1, when breathing out count 2, meaning that breathing in only falls on odd numbers and breathing out on even numbers, and count until 100 is reached. If we are not careless it means we are doing fine, if we are careless we will experience a blurred feeling, then when we breathe in our count will fall on an even number indicating that mindfulness has been lost.

Some people while counting only to 10 forget what they are doing and they continue to forget several times thereafter, this means that such people are close to becoming mad because he or she has no mindfulness at all. **Therefore we must train ourselves to have both mindfulness and self-awareness. Focus on the breath while breathing in and out while keeping mindfulness within oneself at all times. By keeping mindfulness within oneself we will not develop alzheimer disease or become mad. Therefore meditation is an activity of great importance for all of us. It is not an activity for only some designated people.** Luang Por is not teaching for any particular reason of his own. If all of you practice according to what has been explained, happiness and coolness will occur within your mind,

all of you will experience happiness of body and comfort of mind. What I am presenting here are only the basics. For those who are interested in the more advanced practice there is much more to learn. What I have presented is called samatha bhāvanā or concentration meditation or the set of processes that are used to calm the mind, whereas vipassanā bhāvanā or vipassanā meditation refers to the process of contemplation, scrutiny, and investigation to find causes and consequences, and it is a long process. Samatha on the other hand is solely concerned with calming the mind.

The essence of the teachings of the Buddha is based on death and rebirth, essentially meaning that upon death one is reborn. Until we are able to calm our mind we are bound to question this issue of death and rebirth, we may even belittle it and not believe any of it. Why would this be so? For the reason that blind people do not easily believe other people. This is the same. The meditation teachers tell us that this action is evil, this action is sinful. But we may not understand until we meet with the consequences of a bad action. Therefore let us refrain from performing bad actions, because the consequence of a bad action will cause us distress later on, like blind people will be distressed later by not believing people with good eyesights.

Lay devotees and young people. Let us sit in samādhi, but

before doing so let us pay respect to our teachers and then let us extend loving kindness. After sitting in samādhi we ought to dedicate the merit, for example by wishing in our minds that the merit I have accumulated by sitting in samādhi during this past session, during which I have forced the mind and have endured difficulties and pain, be dedicated to assist the souls of my parents and grandparents, and if they are currently enduring suffering (dukkha) that they move beyond suffering, and I wish all souls to be as happy as I wish to be. And at the end of the samādhi session dedicate a second time the meritorious deeds (merits) you have accumulated. But let us now sit in samādhi.

WALKING AND SITTING POSTURES
TO ENHANCE SAMĀDHI
AND CONTEMPLATE WISDOM



A Dhamma Talk given
by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako
to Monks and Lay Devotees on 21 September 2004,
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province

Today is the 8th day of the waxing moon of the 10th month (September) of year BE 2547 (A.C. 2004) and a Buddhist holy day. Today Luang Por is going to show you how to walk in meditation. I have wanted many times to explain the methods of walking meditation according to the tradition of Luang Poo Mun and past meditation teachers. I had wanted to show how walking meditation looks like for us lay men and lay women devotees. Many of us do not know how this is practiced, some walk somewhat awkwardly wondering whether this is the proper way, fearing being laughed at, and they end-up not willing to walk in meditation. Others just go ahead and walk in meditation while remaining uncertain whether this is the proper way. But Luang Por has introduced and shown the way to walk in meditation to several groups of practitioners, and has shown them the proper way to walk. In the case of sitting meditation each practitioner is being asked to practice every single day, and we all know how that is done. Before sitting in meditation I tell practitioners to look at the main Buddha statue, and sit in meditation just like the statue, the difference is that the Buddha statue does not have its eyes fully closed, but for all of us it is better to close our eyes when doing sitting meditation.

One way to practice walking meditation as taught by the Venerable meditation teachers is the following: **while walking in meditation the arms should not be allowed to swing, the arms should not be crossed in front of us, the wrist**

should not be holding the other arm in the back. The proper style to walk in meditation is to walk in a pensive manner, which consists of crossing one hand over the other in front just like the standing Buddha image in the pensive posture representing Friday. But instead of having the hands joined at the level of the chest in the pensive posture of the standing Buddha, the hands are joined at the level of the stomach. This is the posture of the hands while walking in meditation such as Luang Por is now showing you. The direction of the meditation path is our own choice. If we are in our house we can determine our own path direction. **But in reality if given a choice of direction the meditation teachers will walk in the east-west direction or north-south direction. If the meditation path does not fit these directions then walk in whatever direction the meditation path is set for, but an east-west or a north-south direction is preferred. These are the appropriate ways to walk in meditation.**

The length of the walking meditation path ought not be in excess of 30 steps and not less than 15 steps, the preferred length is about 20 steps. Excessively long meditation paths according to meditation teachers increases the risk of ants or other animals crossing the path, but too short a meditation path might make the practitioner dizzy. Therefore an appropriate distance has been determined to be 20 steps. Once we step on a meditation path located for example in an east-west direction,

we stand on the west end of the path facing east, we bring our palms together to our chest, close our eyes, bring our hands together in homage by reciting silently Buddhō-Dhammo-Saṅgho, Buddhō-Dhammo-Saṅgho, Buddhō-Dhammo-Saṅgho, three times, three times for the Buddha, three times for the Dhamma, three times for the Saṅgha. Then we cross our hands in front of us in a contemplative posture, a posture of being in deep thoughts, with both hands crossed at the level of the stomach. With the hands crossed we start the first three rounds of the walking meditation by reciting internally *I pray that I be happy as I take the first step with my right foot. Then reciting internally I pray that others be happy, I pray that I be happy, that others be happy, I pray that I be happy, that others be happy...*

Start with being compassionate, extending compassion or loving kindness allows our mind to be filled with goodness. We will not think of mistreating any one. I pray that I be happy, I pray that all beings on this earth be happy. We repeat this by walking 3 full lengths of the meditation path. Then on the fourth full length leg of walking on the meditation path we refocus our mindfulness anew by reciting internally as we take the first step with the right foot as Bud with the left leg *Dho* and continue *Bud-dho, Bud-dho, Bud-dho*, etc.. by walking normally. Do not walk slowly, walking at the same pace as we walk while going on alms' rounds in the case of monks. Or for ordinary men and women, laymen devotees, lay women devotees we walk at the same pace as we would walk wherever

we go out for an ordinary chore. If we walk too slowly we might become dizzy. **Therefore walking along a meditation path is similar to changing postures among the postures of standing, walking, sitting, and lying down, without making a judgement on which posture is appropriate or inappropriate for meditation. But walking allows us to change postures. In most instances our meditation teachers will normally mention either sitting or walking in meditation.** Very seldom do we see them doing meditation while standing or lying down. Lying down to meditate is not practiced because once you lie down it is easy to fall asleep. There are probably only us who like to lie down while doing meditation, but then two or three minutes later we are already asleep. The meditation teachers do not like to practice meditation while lying down because it is so easy to fall asleep.

How long should we walk in meditation? The answer is as long as we possibly can, sometimes 3-4 hours or 4-5 hours, it all depends. Among some who have ordained or among some lay practitioners their dispositions favor walking meditation because when doing sitting meditation they can easily become drowsy, when walking they do not get sleepy that easily. This is one reason they choose to walk to maintain mindfulness while taking each step and reciting internally *Buddho, Buddho, Buddho* so that the words stay within themselves at all times. At the end of the walking session we return to stand on the same

spot we started off facing the east. We bring our palms together to our chest and recite silently **Buddho-Dhammo-Saṅgho, Buddho-Dhammo-Saṅgho, Buddho-Dhammo-Saṅgho, three times.** Then we allow our mind to dedicate the merit accumulated in the walking session by saying “Today I have practiced the Dhamma seriously to try to achieve mindfulness and allow the mind to become One. With the merit that I have achieved on this occasion I wish to offer this meritorious deed (merit) to those who have shown goodness and mettā towards me in the past such as my father, mother, grandparents on my father’s side and on my mother’s side, my relatives and friends as well as the souls of those I have mistreated in the past, and wish all to meet with happiness. Along with the happiness that I seek I wish all other living beings be accorded the same happiness that I wish for”. And then stop.

After completing our walking meditation session we ought to leave the path and sit in meditation immediately after, because while doing walking meditation the body is in movement while we try to calm the mind, and this is challenging. But if the mind becomes calm while doing **walking meditation** and comes together to become One, we will attain a calmness of the mind that has particularly greater depth. The question is: can our mind become calm while doing **walking meditation.** **The answer is yes, the mind can become calm, although it is challenging.** But if the mind becomes calm

while walking the level of calmness will be much deeper. While doing **walking meditation we of course are trying to calm our mind, but normally it will be challenging as mentioned above.** Then after we leave the walking meditation path if the weather is not too hot, or if the weather is cool, but normally it will not be hot because of the openness of the meditation path, we will pay obeisance by reciting Buddhho, Dhammo, Saṅgho, but we will not recite the full prayers, only Buddhho, Dhammo, Saṅgho. We will then sit in meditation in our ordinary sitting meditation spot, bring our palms together to our chest and think about the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, we will then show compassion by thinking “I am happy, I wish others to be happy” two or three times. Then we bring down our hands to our lap and concentrate on our breathing: inhaling we recite in our mind while inhaling *Bud* exhaling *Dho*, inhaling *Bud* exhaling *Dho*, let go of all tension, do not force the air in any way, allow everything to be natural”. **While doing sitting meditation concentrate on the air being breathed in and out, while breathing in know that you are breathing in, while exhaling know that you are exhaling. Do not follow the air being inhaled in or exhaled out, just keep your mindfulness to the air as it comes into contact with the tip of our nostrils, and while keeping your mindfulness at that location silently recite the word *Buddho*. For some of you who cannot keep your mindfulness because you may have never practiced, in such a case you can try to breathe heavily two or three**

times then slowly reduce the strength of the breathing to a more natural level, then as the breathing becomes normal concentrate on the breath as explained. As mindfulness inadvertently slips, and mindfulness will slip for sure, like new thoughts appearing on top of old thoughts, you must try to bring your mindfulness back to the old routine *Buddho*, do not let it go anywhere else. When it slips again and you become aware of it, just bring your mindfulness back.

If that does not work, it is possible that the breathing rate leaves too large a time span between each breath. As an alternative we can concentrate on the mind, but what are we going to concentrate on? **We can meditate by concentrating on the word *Buddho* and our mindfulness will be focussed on the knowing-nature of our mind, we will silently recite in our mind *Buddho, Buddho, Buddho* rapidly without uttering the term, let the thinking mind recite *Buddho, Buddho, Buddho*. Doing it this way leaves no space between the repetitions of the term to allow for random thoughts to appear. Let mindfulness concentrate only on those words. This is one method that can force the mind to stay within itself in order to attain calmness. If we try our best it is not outside of our capabilities, one day it will surely fall into place, at some moment our mind will attain calmness. The time it will take to succeed will become shorter and shorter, our mindfulness will stay more and more within ourselves and for longer and**

longer periods of time. In the past immediately after we sit in meditation mindfulness would just slip away, but we are now finding that mindfulness stays with us for longer periods of time. When mindfulness stays with us for longer periods of time, it will be easier for our mind to attain calmness.

As the mind enters calmness, the feeling we experience may be called a feeling of being half asleep or a feeling of forgetfulness, or a feeling of having sort of lost mindfulness in that moment. It feels like we are calm, the mantra we are using goes away, the mind stops, the mind lets go, the mind becomes neutral. At that moment our mind will feel coolness and comfort. **The mind will become cool for only an instant as it enters calmness. For a moment the mind passes through khaṇika samādhi during which the mind becomes momentarily calm. From that state of calm some people then withdraw from that state, those who stay in that state can then attain upacarā samādhi.** But those who attain this state of calmness for the first time usually become excited, and the mind becomes calm for only an instant and then withdraws. But the feeling we experience is a feeling which is totally different from any other ordinary experience. **A mind discovering calmness versus the everyday mind are very different from one another. We will know the distinction only if we experience the mind entering the realm of calmness, it is something never to be forgotten. Having experienced calmness of the mind once**

we will want to try anew. And we will continue trying. We can do so by keeping mindfulness within ourselves, not letting it slip away to the outside.

With perseverance, endeavour, solid determination while maintaining mindfulness within ourselves at all times, it should not take too long for the mind to attain the calmness of upacāra samādhī. The feeling is one where mind remains within us, the mind is undistracted, the mind is not hungry for external sense objects and the accompanying feelings they evoke. It grasps the danger of external sense objects that come into contact with the mind. Meaning that whatever the mind hears, the mind does not follow-up on the sounds, meaning mindfulness is consistently within ourselves, meaning mindfulness never slips. At that level of concentration external sounds are still heard such as the sound of the traffic, or the sounds of chatter, but whatever sounds are heard the mind does not go out to acknowledge them, mindfulness is ever present within us, this is called upacāra samādhī. The mind in upacārā samādhī can be used for contemplative meditation. But if we have diligence and great determination to concentrate on the point of focus by ensuring that mindfulness does not slip, that mindfulness stays with us at all times, and if we have a special innate character then the mind will descend into calmness and become One. The mind will have now attained appanā samādhī. When the mind has

attained appanā samādhī, mind and mindfulness become one and the same, whatever mindfulness is the mind will be the same. This is called the deepest calmness of samādhī or appanā samādhī. Samādhī consists of 3 levels: khaṇika samādhī, upacāra samādhī, and appanā samādhī.

When the mind enters the calmness of appanā samādhī, whatever is happening on the outside is not acknowledged, no sound can be heard. What happens to our physical body, how are we sitting or otherwise we cannot tell, we hear nothing, we are unable to perceive anything at all, neither the noise of thunder nor the sound of traffic, the mind is unable to perceive any sounds. At this stage the mind and mindfulness become one and the same. Mindfulness and the physical body on the one hand and mindfulness and the mind on the other hand are clearly seen as different from one another when the mind is calm. But for the mind to attain this depth of calmness is no easy task, do not think that this can be achieved anywhere, do not think that such calmness can be achieved easily. This mind is a mind that is omniscient, it is a mind that has wisdom and is all-knowing within itself. It will know by itself where to let go. The mind cannot reach this depth of calmness in the middle of a street, otherwise we could be run over by a car. Those who sit in samādhī to attain calmness must find a place which is the safest of places, the most quiet of places. Only in such places will the mind become calm.

To attain appanā samādhī we need to be far removed from congestion and confusion, it cannot be attained by sitting anywhere, such depth of calmness cannot be reached that simply. **Those who can attain such depth of calmness are those who are cautious and prudent toward themselves and in particular toward their own mind that knows.**

After a while the mind pulls back from calmness and while in upacāra samādhī one knows by oneself where our mind was a while ago without asking anyone. **From the standpoint of the practitioner there is no need to ask anyone, we only know that a while ago our mind was calm, cool, and exceedingly happy. Whatever mindfulness was the mind was the same. It was evidently clear that the physical body and the mind are different entities from one another. Those who have reached that stage can distinguish and understand concepts such as death and rebirth, or death and emptiness, or whether the way to enlightenment and nibbāna really exists, or whether after death one can experience rebirth, or whether the physical body and the mind are different entities. A mind that has experienced that level of samādhī does not need to ask anyone else. In the Dhamma this is referred to as *paccattam* an innate knowledge that is privy to the practitioner alone. There is no need to ask anyone else.** When the mind has attained that level of calmness knowledge comes to oneself automatically, knowledge that the physical body will break

apart for certainty, and that the mind and the body are clearly different from one another even though they co-exist with one another. The physical body is like a car, the driver is a person, it is not the car, the car is not a person, a person is not the car. It is the same analogy in this case, the body is not the mind, the mind is not the body, they are different from one another. This is the distinction.

I therefore urge everyone here to be diligent in working toward attaining calmness of mind. According to the saying *Natthi Santiparam Sukham* (there exists no greater happiness than calmness of mind). If all of us have the endeavour, the determination then the goal will surely be attained one day. Therefore the practice of walking meditation as Luang Por has explained can be practiced in our home after the children have retired and gone to bed. One can then find a secluded place to walk to and fro silently reciting *Buddho, Buddho, Buddho*. For people of a certain age changing posture is healthy and exercise is important, if it is not feasible to exercise outdoors, walking meditation at home is one answer. Most of the meditation teachers who have reached old age will normally walk, they will try to walk, they will try to walk as much as possible in order to change their posture. They do not just eat and sleep, sleep and eat, and enjoy the three happiness by not getting up and move about. To stay put and only eat and sleep is not healthy, one day such people will end up getting

a stroke and become paralyzed, or diseases will come calling, and eventually such people will become a burden to their children and grandchildren. **Therefore all of us including all the lay devotees present here can do the practice by walking or sitting in meditation and calm the mind, leave worries and problems aside, whatever is going to happen let it happen. If a person upholds the Dhamma within his mind he will receive peacefulness and contentment, his mind will become refreshed and happy. Whatever thoughts might come up he will be able to let go of them or put them down.**

Then after having attained calmness how do we progress further in our studies of the essence of what Lord Buddha has taught? Calmness of mind in itself is still not sufficient. **Calmness of mind is only a stage where the mind is at rest, where the mind is no longer hungry for external sense objects and hungry for the accompanying feelings they evoke. After the mind has reached calmness to its core, there comes a time for the mind to exit its state of calmness, but we can also say that we need to force the mind to exit its state of calmness. Meditation teachers refer to this process as bringing the mind to contemplate. But what do we mean by forcing the mind to contemplate? In most instances those who attain calmness to its core are reluctant to leave that state of calm and perform contemplative meditation. The reason is that doing contemplative meditation is similar to going out to**

work, for the mind this is a tiring activity. The mind will normally not like to come out of its state of calm, it does not like to come out and contemplate. This is why it is referred to as forcing mindfulness, or forcing the mind to contemplate the physical body. What is most visible to contemplate are bones. You may have seen sketches of skeletons in books, in some monasteries you might see a real skeleton hanging, sketches of skeletons can be seen in medical books. All of us have a similar skeleton within our bodies. We then use our mindfulness to look at our body starting from the skull: What does the skull look like, the skull resembles a bottle gourd or a pot made up of four stiched surfaces covering a brain inside, although we do not have to imagine the brain, at this stage we only want to focus on the bones. We choose to focus on the skull which has empty eye cavities, another empty cavity where the nose was located. Normally we will see the nose protruding out covered with a layer of skin, when this is taken out all we see is an empty cavity. Then we will see all the upper teeth separate from the upper jawbone. Then we look at the upper and lower jaw bones, they are not bound together, but are tied together by tendons. Looking at the lower jaw bone with the lower teeth fixed upon it protruding out try to imagine where it is attached, and where the skull is attached. The skull rests on the neck bones made up of vertabrae that support one another. What are neck bones attached to? The neck bones are attached to the collar bone. The bones of the arms are all connected.

Coming down the right arm is a single bone that contacts with the bones of the elbow joint that allows for movement. Then there are the two bones of the lower arms that connect with the wrist bones that connect with the bones of the palm, the bones of the fingers that come in segments. Such are the bones that are the object of our contemplation. Then we move from the left arm up repeating the same contemplation. We contemplate the spine bones, the rib bones, bones at the level of the waist, the bones in the pelvis, the bones in the legs, the bones in the knee, the bones in the front part of the shin, the bones of the foot, the bones of the toes. We concentrate just on the bones within the human body. **Then we ask ourselves whether we actually have all these bones within ourselves, we certainly cannot deny that we have bones, no one sitting here can deny that they have bones. The reason we are all able to sit upright is because our bones are the enabling structure, but if we remove all the bones we are left as skin puppets containing flesh, excrements, urine, blood. The reason we can sit straight up is because of the skeleton within ourselves. This is the way to contemplate the bones. On the number of times one should contemplate bones, the Venerable teachers tell us to contemplate the bones many times over, from the palm of the feet to the head, from the head to the palm of the feet, like raking a field to and fro. Contemplate until one has gained confidence, until one has removed all doubts that the physical body does not contain anything else.**

Such as knowing from saññā and from saṅkhāra, from saññā meaning knowing based on memory from something we have seen before, from saṅkhāra meaning something created through thoughts forming in the mind that the body must be in such a way and cannot be anything else. Therefore practice until the mind is calm and has attained samādhi and then contemplate the body, or go even deeper than that, for example contemplate the body being made up of the 4 elements: earth, water, wind, fire, and that the body is really made up of these four elements. Or contemplate the body as a loathsome or filthy object. Within our stomach what do we have, there is excrement, urine, there is a liver, there are intestines, there is a heart, there are 32 different parts of the human body. **The contemplation of the body must be divided this way. For those who are not seduced by the body will not be seduced by anything else. Misguidedness that we see every day originates from obsession with the body, obsession with one's body, outside of ourselves we are obsessed with other peoples' bodies. From there we are obsessed with wealth, we become obsessed with ranks and titles, and obsessed with various other things.**

As we contemplate this way, we will see the truth according to the Dhamma of Lord Buddha. We will let the reality appear by itself. When the mind has seen this reality the mind will no longer be misled, the mind will know when it is being misled. Only by knowing that it is being misled

the mind will become disinterested, why would it cling to the body? This is a skeleton, that is a liver, that is a kidney, these are the intestines, and then one day it will all eventually break-up, then why must we continue to cling to it? Are we going to continue to stay with such things, are we going to stay with those bones, or stay with the liver, the kidneys and the intestines, stay with the skin, stay with our flesh, stay with bone ligaments, stay with our excrements, stay with our blood. If we count all of these off one by one, then we will see through the fabrication, and we will become disinterested, the attachments will ease up. It will not ease up anywhere else but in our own mind. **It will feel like knowing and seeing the truth, at which instant the various defilements of rāga, dosa, moha will no longer be able to enter the mind, because knowledge based on reality has been achieved. This was not based on something fabricated, even though the mind has the potential to fabricate, it can fabricate things that suit the defilements, but on the other hand it can fabricate things that suit the Dhamma as well. Now that we have discovered the real truth we can let go. The meditation teachers say that as we learn the truth in our minds, enlightenment occurs in the mind, nibbāna does not exist anywhere else, it exists in our mind.**

At the beginning Luang Por explained how to walk in meditation, how to sit in meditation, how to concentrate to attain samādhi, explained about the objects of contemplation and the

methods of contemplation. These are the basics of the practice so that we can visualize the entire meditation structure. It is now our turn to do the practice as Luang Por has explained. Luang Por can assure you 100% that none of what I have said is incorrect because I have studied under the Venerable meditation teachers based on the monastic code of discipline. And only thereafter have I started to disseminate these teachings to all of us. I wish to add another point for those of you who sit in meditation and nothing occurs when their mind reaches upacāra or khaṇika samādhī, while appanā samādhī literary means nothing occurs. **But while in upacāra samādhī, even though the mind remains within oneself, the mind still has the ability to contemplate, mindfulness will remain within oneself, and it is at this level of samādhī that nimitta can appear. When nimitta appear various images or visions can be perceived by the mind. We may decide to contemplate them, some may see a person in the process of dying or we may see an old person. Some sights can sometimes bring fear. At times we may see visions of the realms of suffering or we may see visions of the realm of heavens. We can see miscellaneous images depending on the tendencies one may have. At this particular stage when nimitta appear our mind is in upacāra samādhī. As nimitta appear there is no need to be afraid, worried or concerned whatsoever. We will just strive to bring our mindfulness back toward the original objects of meditation we started off in our meditation. We had**

started our practice by following the breath in and out hadn't we? Breathing in *Bud* breathing out *Dho* wasn't it? After seeing nimitta we can return to our original objects of meditation. Breathing in *Bud* breathing out *Dho*, *Buddho Buddho Buddho*. Those nimitta will go away by themselves. Everything will disappear, there is no reason to be fearful. This is something every practitioner needs to know. If nimitta appear for example as we are doing walking meditation we can try to stay focused on whatever there is to see. If we do that then the nimitta will expand in numbers, there is no end to them. It is like watching films all day and night. If this film is worth watching then fine, but if the film is a horror film then it brings fear, and you can even lose your mind.

Therefore be aware of this issue, whatever happens to you or if you see anything while doing meditation you must ask the meditation teacher whom you believe will know what you are talking about, and not waste time asking questions right and left to anyone. Asking someone who does not do the practice is like asking how to add, subtract, multiply, divide, calculate a percentage to a person who has no basics of mathematics, and how do you suppose they will be able to answer you. You must ask these questions to those who really know what they are talking about. As we do the practice, whenever we encounter issues we cannot find answers to, we must ask a meditation teacher. The point mentioned earlier about nimitta

is a point that most people who do the practice are confronted with. There exists another point I would like to bring up. When you sit in meditation and focus on breathing in *Bud*, breathing out *Dho*, *Buddho Buddho Buddho*, the breathing will feel finer and finer and there comes a moment when we no longer feel our breathing, when the breathing stops we no longer feel the body, we no longer feel the air, at this point we no longer know what to focus on, so what happens is that we breathe again because we have been overtaken by fear, fear that we are no longer breathing, basically we are afraid of dying. But why has breathing stopped even though we have been focusing on it. So out of fear we re-focus on the breathing and the breath has now become coarser rather than finer. Next time we sit in meditation the same phenomenon will happen again and we do not progress in our meditation because at this point the breath will become coarser again as before. **On this point I would like to warn all of us lay practitioners, that when we have all reached this point, when our focus is on the breath and the breath stops do not fear for your life, do not worry, do not be concerned about anything. Allow your mindfulness to focus on the mind that knows, have your mindfulness stop in that place. Have mindfulness ask who is it that knows that the breath has disappeared, have mindfulness ask how can it be that the breath has disappeared, ask who is the one that knows that the breath has disappeared. Have your mindfulness focus only on the mind that knows, without being worried**

or concerned about anything. Let your mindfulness stay there. If we have this understanding we will not die because we are aware of what is going on. When mindfulness has focused itself on that objective the mind will enter a realm of deeper and deeper calmness. Luang Por will not explain further, only let your mindfulness focus on that point without worries or concerns. This is something that all of us have come across in our practice and have often heard about when the sensation of the breath disappears. But then out of fear we breathe more heavily anew causing the mind to become coarse again. It's like restarting again and again. **Therefore do not forget that there are two caveats, the first is the caveat of the nimitta, the second is the caveat of the breath disappearing causing us to become distressed. And then we must restart anew, meaning that we are not going anywhere with our practice.** So let us all remember these two points, then work toward your mind becoming calm, when the mind has reached a calmness to a deep enough level then withdraw from that depth of calmness and use the mind to do contemplation to attain wisdom as Luang Por has already explained.

Today I have already spent a long time explaining details of the practice, most of us will probably not be able to practice all the points that I have covered, some of you may even be confused. Therefore let me now stop, and let us sit in samādhi.

LOOKING AT THE MIND THROUGH CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY



A Dhamma Talk given
by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako
to Monks and Lay Devotees on 29 March 2006,
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province

For all of us who have ordained either temporarily or for the long term do listen carefully. Let us remind ourselves that being in the yellow robes, even as newly ordained monks, we must be diligent in the practice while behaving within the monastic codes of conduct and discipline. **Let us practice meditation (bhāvanā) as it is something particularly important for us to study. We have already spent time studying everything else, but meditation is at the heart of what monks should be involved in, it is the heart of Buddhism, meditation is what Lord Buddha wishes for his disciples to practice the most. Other topics such as the monastic codes of conduct and discipline are merely instruments that are designed to facilitate the practice of meditation.**

The precepts (sīla) which form the moral code of conduct for practitioners as mentioned earlier demarcate an enclosure, or create a fence to prevent the mind (citta) from wandering too far. This is true for the 5 precepts, the 8 precepts, the 10 precepts or the 227 precepts, basically the purpose is to prevent the mind of Buddhist devotees to lose their way, to keep the mind within the confines of the precepts and help the mind progress through the path to enlightenment. Should we misbehave and continually break the precepts then the journey will take longer. The precepts decreed by the Buddha may be compared to a path demarcated by two fences preventing the practitioner from deviating from the path. The precepts include the 227

precepts of Bhikkhus, the 8 precepts and the 5 precepts for lay devotees. Those who practice within the enclosure of the 5 precepts are respected and admired, the same is true for those who uphold the 8 precepts. Those who abide by moral codes of conduct are respected. People in general will pay especially great respect to those who abide by the 227 precepts like us. People in general are unable to abide by those precepts like we do. **People do not pay respect to yellow robes and bald heads, they pay respect to those who practice virtuously by upholding the precepts. Therefore we must continuously reflect on the purity of our precepts. By strongly upholding the precepts we will become more courageous and more invigorated in our endeavor. Abiding by precepts will also safeguard our actions and speech.**

The practice of samādhi is designed to calm the mind, and bring the mind to a state of being One. This can be achieved for example through one particular meditation method that focuses on the breath while breathing in and out, and silently reciting the word *Bud* while breathing in and the word *Dho* while breathing out. This is a kammaṭṭhāna method proposed by Venerable meditation teacher Luang Poo Mun and taught to all of his numerous disciples. These disciples who have become meditation teachers have continued to teach this method of meditation to subsequent generations of disciples down to our generation. **Some 2000 years ago the Buddha sat in meditation**

at the foot of the bodhi tree using the method of focusing on the breath by being mindful when breathing in, and mindful when breathing out. But the Buddha did not make use of the word *Buddho* but only acknowledged the breath being inhaled and exhaled, with mindfulness on whether the inhalation and exhalation was short or long. Subsequently Venerable Luang Poo Mun suggested a modification to this meditation method by adding a silent recitation of the word *Bud* when breathing in and the word *Dho* when breathing out, or *Buddho, Buddho*, while maintaining mindfulness in the present, not allowing thoughts going back into the past, not allowing thoughts going into the future which has not yet arrived. The mind must be kept in the present, the Dhamma will also occur in the present. A mind fully in the here and now is a mind that has great value. A mind that thinks and worries about the past, a mind which thinks and worries about the future is a mind that is of no value. Therefore let us all practice meditation while reciting the word *Buddho, Buddho* within ourselves.

Once the mind has attained calmness, one can start contemplation aimed at wisdom. Lord Buddha has recommended that contemplation start by focusing on the 5 kammaṭṭhāna: kesā, lomā, nakhā, dantā, taco, or the 5 objects of contemplation that preceptors mention to all newly ordained monks and novices: kesā refers to hair, lomā refers to body hair,

nakhā refers to nails, dantā refers to teeth, taco refers to the skin. What do kammaṭṭhāna monks contemplate and do not contemplate? The proper contemplation methods aim at seeing and realizing that those objects of contemplation are not objects of beauty, but objects that are loathsome by nature. What does a piece of hair look like, what is the shape and size of each piece, when they fall off what happens to them. What does body hair look like, what happens if we do not look after our nails. What happens when teeth are not brushed and cleansed, imagine how unclean they can become. Imagine taco, the skin that wraps up one's entire body, what would the body smell like if the body has not been bathed and cleaned. **The Buddha has taught to practice contemplation on all these objects so that the true nature of these objects is revealed. These are only the initial objects of contemplation. For lack of time during the ordination ceremony the preceptor mentions only briefly the 5 kammaṭṭhāna to be used for early contemplation by newly ordained monks and novices. This is like providing 2-3 bullets to go into battle against defilements which are the enemy. Failing to contemplate the 5 kammaṭṭhāna, defilements such as sexual craving and anger will creep themselves up into one's mind. This is the reason the preceptor has given the newly ordained monks and novices 5 bullets with which to shoot down these defilements.**

From then on the newly ordained monks and novices will be

told to practice contemplation. They will be taught the proper methods to shoot at defilements, they will be taught why some people shoot and miss their target and how to shoot to hit the target. Let us go into the Buddha's objectives in teaching about the 5 kammaṭṭhāna which are also mentioned briefly by the preceptor. After ordination newly ordained monks and novices will go into more details in their contemplation besides contemplating hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, as mentioned by their preceptor. They will start contemplating flesh as objects of contemplation. They will contemplate and see that the body is made up of lumps of flesh on the shins, on the legs, in various other organs. These resemble pig flesh, cow flesh, or buffalo flesh. Then there are tendons, bones, small intestines, bone marrow, the spleen, the heart, the liver, fascia, the kidneys, the lungs, the large intestines, the small intestines, new food, old food, the bile, phlegm, blood, pus, and urine for example.

The medical students who have just ordained have seen all of this and they all know the details of the human body. But in reality the knowledge of the medical students is a knowledge based on memory (saññā) and based on thoughts and imagination (saṅkhāra). However according to the foundation of Buddhism knowledge must come from wisdom. But what does knowing through wisdom mean? The answer is that wisdom is the realization that the body does not belong to us, that it is made up of flesh, skin,

tendons, bones, and the day will come when our body will disintegrate and eventually die, and other people are fated to die as well. But we only learn that death occurs to someone else when we hear about it, but when the time comes for us to encounter our own death we shiver, and we tell ourselves that we have taken good care of our health and we shouldn't die. But death spares no one. When the time comes it happens to young medical doctors, or to adult doctors as well as to old doctors. Eventually every one must die including doctors and ordinary people. Oftentimes some ordinary people even outlive medical doctors. Basically everybody must die, no one can live eternally, when someone's time is up he has to go.

Lord Buddha has taught the use of contemplation to learn about the human body and what it is made up of. The human body is made up of 32 different components. The bones form the supporting structure for the body, without a skeleton structure our body would only have flesh and skin, and how would we possibly be able to walk? We can walk because a skeleton structure is similar to having a steel structure inside our bodies. This is an example of how we can contemplate the body. In our early years our body was that of a child, but later on with proper nourishment and health care our body grew up into a full-fledged adult body. Then as we grow old and decrepit our body will become wrinkled and shrink in size. **No matter how elaborate and hygienic the food we are served with may be,**

no matter how well we may be medically looked after with the very best medicines that can be found, this body remains an entity different from ourselves. When the time comes for it to grow old it will grow old, when the time comes for it to become sick it will become sick, when it is time for it to die it will die. No one is able to resist these changes in our body. The whole process gravitates toward impermanence, suffering, and not-self. For that reason Lord Buddha has reminded us to be diligent in our lives, that this body is not something real and permanent, one day it will break-up and die away.

Most of us give importance on the body, whereas the Buddha gives more importance on the mind (citta). In every human being there exists an intangible element that cannot be seen with the naked eye. We can always dissect and cut out any parts of the body yet we will not see that intangible element. This intangible element can be described as that which knows. According to science, according to medicine, according to various thinkers and various scientists the brain is the epicenter of all thoughts. But according to the foundation of Buddhism and according to Lord Buddha himself the brain is viewed as only a tool of the mind. The mind is that which knows. That intangible element cannot be seen but takes a commanding role in the body, and the brain serves merely as an instrument of the mind. The brain

plays the role of a computer whereas the mind operates and gives out orders to the computer. But once the body breaks up and dies the mind stops using the computer as the computer no longer operates. Sometimes the body has not yet died but is physically impaired one way or another, with the computer malfunctioning and non-operational, but the mind still resides within the body but can no longer function. **Then eventually the body breaks up and that intangible element leaves the body to be reborn in another body. We start counting from one again, the body will grow up into adulthood again. This is the nature of the cycle of birth and rebirth. This intangible element or mind is like a traveller that is born and reborn again and again in the never ending rounds of existences.**

The Buddha places more importance in nāmadhamma (things that are intangible) than rūpadhamma (material objects). In Buddhism rūpadhamma deals with life and relationships. But nāmadhamma as taught by Lord Buddha in his discourses of *abhidhamma* and *paramatthadhamma* covers the elaborate ways of the mind. Such as when trying to measure the mind, the mind has already gone somewhere else. Trying to measure the mind thinking about one issue, the mind is now thinking about a second, a third or a fourth issue, and this goes on without limits. **And every day our thoughts go out in so many directions and on so many topics. But in reality there is only one mind, but the thought process, the ways of the mind,**

the types of thoughts, all are so varied. How can we make sense of all this? One way to bring closure to this is to find a way to force the mind to become One, that is the only way. This is why samādhi is of utmost importance. What can we do to enable the mind to achieve calmness and become One?

We can use samādhi and focus on the breath when breathing in and out, to stop the mind from being distracted elsewhere. This way the mind is able to accumulate energy, develop strength and become One. When the mind becomes One we can now use the mind to contemplate, and whatever is being contemplated will become very clear. For example through contemplation the 5 kammaṭṭhāna will be seen in elaborate details and with great clarity because the mind will not be thinking of anything else. **The contemplation process will focus on the composition of the physical body: skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, spleen, heart, liver. Focusing on anything will allow seeing it with great clarity. Contemplating bones in our body will tell us how many pieces of bones we have, the types of bones we have, all these will be seen clearly. After having contemplated the body and seen everything clearly, we may now focus on a particular part of the body without moving our focus anywhere else. For example focusing on the heart, we will feel a sensation of motion to and fro like a factory pump, it beats all the time, it pumps all the time, we set our mindfulness on that point within the heart, not letting our thoughts wander anywhere else, just look at our**

own heart. From then on we can allow the mind to return to calmness once again.

Luang Ta Maha Boowa (Ācariya Maha Boowa Nāṇasampanno) has introduced the concept that *samādhi can be acquired through wisdom*. The concept proposes that the practice start with contemplation first. This will lead to seeing the reality of whatever is being contemplated or the truth, if the practitioner is unable to contemplate anything else he may try to focus on a particular part of the body, leading the mind to calm down and become One. When the mind has become One, focus on the body again, and then look at the mind, look at that which knows, what does that which knows think about, why does it think that way. Through mindfulness we will see our own mind, what is our mind thinking about, which ways are these fabrications of the mind aimed at, are these thoughts useful or are they useless, if they are useful how useful are they, should we think about those things. When mindfulness is strong enough we are able to catch any glimpses of thoughts, and know what the thoughts are about. If mindfulness is weak, contemplation of the body can easily stray, we might be able to focus for a while but then it just slips away to think about other things altogether, this is what happens when mindfulness is weak. When mindfulness is strong, if we focus on something the focus will remain there, then after contemplating the body

we may focus our contemplation on the mind itself, on that which knows.

This very point is especially important for practitioners, we must look at the mind, see what the mind is thinking about, see what it is fabricating, is it fabricating anything dealing with defilements such as attachment or anger, let us not mention delusion because delusion is a basis for all defilements, thus normally our mind will tend either toward attachment or anger. If our mindfulness is strong we will see what the mind is up to and predict in which direction the mind is ready to fabricate its thoughts.

For this reason meditation teachers tell us to practice meditation. Meditation is of utmost importance to meditation masters, and it is the wish of the Buddha to see meditation practiced. By doing meditation and looking into our mind we are then able to acquire knowledge about everything. If we are not agile to know our mind well enough then everything that happens in this world will only appear to us as disorderly and chaotic.

Oh this way is good, oh that way is bad, why does this have to be this way, why does that have to be like that, basically the mind will impose its opinion on every happening elsewhere, the mind will sow issues everywhere, it will embellish and

remake the whole world to suit its desires, and everything in one's mind will be chaotic and confused. **Whereas by looking inside ourselves we will know immediately when the mind scrambles out in some direction and what it is going to fabricate, we will know immediately if the thoughts that pop up are gloomy thoughts or cheerful thoughts. We will know exactly what is happening within our mind, being satisfied with a thought will be one thing, being dissatisfied will be something else. All these happenings all come out of our mind, as soon as the mind is about to make a move our mindfulness can nip it in the bud.**

Basically we need to consider this human habit carefully, but let us not hold onto it firmly because this human habit is non-self (anattā). The discourse on Dhamma anattā deals squarely with this issue, that of not holding onto fixed beliefs. The Dhamma that meditation teachers teach is not holding firmly onto either gloom or cheerfulness, onto either black or white, onto either darkness or daylight, onto either merit or sin, neither of which belong to us, we should not hold onto them firmly. This is the purest Dhamma teaching given by the meditation teachers as well as Lord Buddha. For all of us even though we may not have reached that level of understanding, let us nevertheless listen to these words that can be our guiding light. Then one day we may want to reflect on or contemplate these words. There is nothing of

course wrong if we wish to reflect on or contemplate these words at this very moment. While doing meditation focus only on the body and look at our mind. If we are obsessed with something means that our mind is misguided and obsessed because we have not observed it. Therefore let us look at our own mind so that we do not become misguided. If our mind is not misguided we will never be misguided by anything.

Today I have given a relatively long and elaborate talk about the Dhamma as part of performing dāna. Now let us sit in meditation.

PRECEPTS, MEDITATIVE CALM, WISDOM
AND THE THREE COMPONENTS OF A TREE:
BARK, SAPWOOD, AND HEARTWOOD



A Dhamma Talk given
by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako
to Monks and Lay Devotees on 13 February 2006,
Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery,
Na Yung District, Udon Thani Province

We have been involved in many activities today the 13th. This morning we participated in merit-making, we paid respect to Lord Buddha, we accepted to abide by the precepts. This afternoon we made the traditional clockwise walk around the stupa at Phu Korn monastery. This evening we did the same at our monastery by walking around the image of Phra Buddha Udom Mongkol. And just now we completed the evening prayers. We participated in activities related to this very important Buddhist anniversary of Māgha Pūjā for the year B.E. 2549 (2006). Today seeing the participation in these activities by the lay devotees of Na Yung district was very comforting. The activities we engaged in today remind me of Lord Buddha and the 1,250 Arahants who together decreed guidelines that became the foundation of Buddhism. **Take note that the Buddha including all the monks present were all without blemish and all devoid of the defilements of rāga, dosa, moha. All 1,250 monks and the Buddha, the founding father of the religion, joined together to set the foundation that became the code of monastic discipline to be enshrined for all the disciples of Lord Buddha to abide by and practice. These guidelines were set by those with the highest purity of mind totally devoid of all material desires, devoid of raga, dosa, moha. The teachings or the dhamma or the principles that the Buddha and the 1,250 arahants decreed in a set of guidelines are now solidly enshrined. These guidelines or foundations may be stronger than stone pillars, these**

include for example the Dhamma of Lord Buddha, the code of monastic discipline governing monks, the precepts for monks to observe, and the precepts for lay followers to observe.

This evening I will not talk about precepts (sīla) because this was mentioned this morning, I will talk about meditative calm (samādhi) because precepts, meditative calm, and wisdom (paññā) are all inter-related. **We cannot talk only about paññā, similarly we cannot talk only about sīla, we also cannot only talk about samādhi because of this inter-relationship. This is similar to a tree that comprises bark, sapwood, and hardwood. We can make the following analogy: sīla is similar to the bark, samādhi is similar to the sapwood, and paññā is similar to the heartwood.** So when we talk about sīla we talk about the bark, without the bark the tree cannot prosper and is destined to die. This is what is done to cause a tree to die, remove the bark and the tree eventually dies. **Therefore the bark, sapwood and heartwood are all inter-related. Before the center of the tree becomes heartwood it must depend on the bark and the sapwood. In a similar manner sīla, samādhi, paññā are equally inter-related.** Sīla is about our behavior, our actions, the way we behave in a group, the guidelines we must abide by. In this world there exist guidelines about how we live, about how we ought to speak to others, about our actions, guidelines on proper speech, these are all part of sīla.

Whereas practicing samādhi to calm the mind is a personal issue, it is a practice that attempts to look inwardly into our mind so that the mind does not concoct miscellaneous outward thoughts. The practice is based on how to prevent the mind from creating thoughts going outward, basically stop sending out thoughts.

The Buddha used a method of his own choice to attain samādhi. The kammatṭhāna chosen by the Buddha was to focus on the breath while breathing in and breathing out. On the full moon of the 6th month, the Buddha focused on the breath as he breathed in and out prior to attaining enlightenment. Then after attaining enlightenment the Buddha developed a set of recommendations on how to attain samādhi. In these recommendations the Buddha did not solely focus on the breath in and out, but in addition mentioned the 40 kammatṭhāna. The 40 kammatṭhāna include mindfulness of the Buddhas, mindfulness of the Dhamma, mindfulness of the Sangha, mindfulness of the devas, anapanasati or mindfulness of the breath, maraṇasati or mindfulness of death, mindfulness of nibbāna, meaning the 10 recollections. The Buddha also mentioned the 10 kasina. **In all the Buddha mentioned some 40 methods. The Buddha gave these kammatṭhāna to four types of Buddhist disciples (bhikkhus, bhikkhunīs, laymen, laywomen) for them to practice and assist them attain samādhi, allowing their minds to be imbued with the sense-objects of the kammatṭhāna,**

depending on which disciple is at ease with which kammaṭṭhāna or depending on the liking of each practitioner. The practitioner can for example choose whether to recite an incantation or use one of the kammaṭṭhāna in his practice.

The purpose of each kammaṭṭhāna is designed to lead the mind toward calmness, and allow the mind to become One. Any kammaṭṭhāna may be chosen. However if the mind reaches some degree of calmness using that kammaṭṭhāna but does not become One, the mind will still be able to concoct thoughts in all directions, and samādhī may not be achieved. This means that the kammaṭṭhāna chosen is useless. It is similar to boiling medicinal plants to produce a medicinal brew, or taking a unique medicine obtained from whichever place and through whatever elaborate method, but the medicine is unable to cure the disease. This means that that particular medicine is useless. But if whatever medicine used to cure the disease is given and results in the disease being contained, then that medicine is useful. **It is similar to the various kammaṭṭhāna that the Buddha has suggested, one of which may fit our particular personality and behavior, then that particular kammaṭṭhāna ought to be used in our practice. Therefore we should not unequivocally judge which kammaṭṭhāna is the best or the most proper. There is nothing more self-defeating than having an attitude that we must use this or that kammaṭṭhāna only. Whomever has such an attitude reflects a narrow**

perspective. The Buddha himself has suggested a total of 40 kammaṭṭhāna. We ought to believe those who have already tasted the fruits of enlightenment using other methods beyond those suggested by the Buddha. All the kammaṭṭhāna suggested have one purpose, that is to induce the mind to become One, to induce the mind to attain calmness and to become One. The issue is what to do to induce the mind to become One.

The Buddha mentioned these kammaṭṭhāna because each person has a particular personality and a set of behaviors particular to that person. For example a person may be inclined to have a personality with a strong affinity for objects of beauty. Then what choice of kammaṭṭhāna would be appropriate for this person? the recommendation is to use asubha or loathsome and repulsive objects. For those who like objects of beauty the contemplation of asubha evens things out. For those whose personality leads them to worry constantly the recommendation is to focus on the breath while breathing in and out. While for those whose personality tend toward dosa or anger the appropriate kammaṭṭhāna may be one that leans toward compassion such as extending loving kindness towards others, or refraining from hating or becoming angry against anyone. Do look at yourselves, some of the things you have done in the past may have been wrong, some may have been right, then why should we be angry at someone else. Therefore the recommendation is to extend loving kindness. These were instructions given by

the Buddha depending on the personality and behavior of the person involved. If a person worries constantly and is undecisive, worrying about this or about that, the recommendation is to focus on the breath in and out. **The kammatṭhāna which fits all personalities is the kammatṭhāna that focuses on the breath being inhaled and exhaled. This is appropriate for almost all personalities. But the Buddha did not say that the kammatṭhāna focusing on the breath in and out was the best method, he never said that.**

To determine the kammatṭhāna best suited to improve and develop ourselves we can test various methods of meditation (bhāvanā). What does focusing on the breath in and out feel like, or what does silently repeating the word death or what does focusing on anicca (impermanence) feel like. But as a word of precaution do not change kammatṭhāna too often. Changing kammatṭhāna too often is not recommended, such as one day choosing one kammatṭhāna, then the next day changing to another. And then hearing someone say that this kammatṭhāna is better, and switch to this new kammatṭhāna we hear about. What happens is that we become a person with no foundations, we no longer know where our standpoint is. **Eventually we may even adopt several kammatṭhāna on the same day, we keep on listening to suggestions from others without observing ourselves. We can focus on a mantra or focus on the breath in and out, then observe how we feel, does our**

mind become calm more easily, does it attain calmness. Or while walking in meditation we think Bud as our right leg steps out and Dho as our left leg steps out, and see how that feels, does our mind become calmer. Or if we focus on death every time we breathe in and out, we tell ourselves that eventually everybody must die. By thinking about death continually, how does our mind react, if we meditate using this kammaṭṭhāna does our mind become calm more easily, does our mind refrain from being unsettled, refrain from fantasizing, or refrain from sending thoughts outwardly. It is our responsibility to observe our mind's behavior during our practice.

If we do not observe ourselves while doing the practice, and listen to what others suggest and do the practice their way day in and day out without observing ourselves, it would be like managing a business and work based on what other people tell us to do without paying attention to capital costs, profits and losses. Eventually we cannot expect to progress in our business, and it will be difficult for us to become wealthy. This is all because we have failed to look after and be attentive to our business. The practice of the Dhamma follows similar perspectives. **Therefore when practicing meditation let us all observe ourselves when we practice focusing on a particular kammaṭṭhāna, be very attentive, be very serious, do not be aimless, do not change kammaṭṭhāna often. Observe**

what happens when using that kammaṭṭhāna in particular whether our mind becomes bored and the kammaṭṭhāna does not fit our personality.

As we practice meditation to a certain level of advancement our mind attains calmness and becomes One. Our mind will become cool, comfortable, it will no longer fabricate, it will no longer be muddled, the mind will be restrained. Once the mind becomes One we will be able to see ourselves, our mind will not concoct or fantasize anything. Then eventually our mind will enter khaṇika, then upacāra, and appanā samādhī. In appanā samādhī the mind and mindfulness become one and the same. Whatever mindfulness is the mind is the same, mind and mindfulness become indistinguishable. We can say that the mind is One, meaning that we have reached the deepest level of samādhī, meaning the mind has fused into One. The experience of attaining appanā samādhī is probably similar for everyone who has attained that stage. Appanā samādhī is the deepest stage of samādhī. But whatever description is given appanā samādhī is a place of happiness for the mind, it is best explained as extreme happiness or bliss. This is how a level of samādhī where the mind does not concoct or fantasize towards the outside feels like. **The mind that is calm and becomes One besides being in a state of happiness is also in a state where the practitioner is confident of himself. He will know the difference between whether one dies and is reborn or**

whether one dies into nothingness, and he can also fathom the concept that what it is that is reborn and what it is that dies, and what it is that becomes zero. This understanding is apparent to the practitioner who has attained the level of appanā samādhī. At that level there is the understanding that this body will break up for sure but the mind will remain prominent. This knowledge will be pre-eminent even after the body has broken up. This entity that is prominent will leave the body and continue on in the cycle of birth and rebirth, it will be reborn in other realms, in other lands. The practitioner will attain this knowledge when the mind has entered calmness and become One, or appanā samādhī.

Therefore the mind that has attained appanā samādhī ought to have gone through that experience. But we do not say that one must only reach calmness of the mind first before working one's way toward wisdom (paññā). **Of course if the mind becomes calm, let it become calm, when the mind is calm the mind is not hungry for various sense-objects or feelings. At that stage our mind will be satiated with Dhamma, with samādhī Dhamma, the mind will no longer wobble, the mind will become absolutely calm. But if the mind enters absolute calmness it will be difficult for it to gain wisdom, actually it will not be possible to gain wisdom that way. The exception is those who are *khippābhiññā*, meaning those who are able to understand the Dhamma very quickly but these**

are a special class of practitioners. In the case of horses these would be called pedigreed horses, or horses that run especially fast. For a human being it would be like a person with high IQ plus good fortune and destiny. **People whose minds have attained calmness and can leapfrog to attain wisdom (paññā), meaning those with the ability to see the truth of the Dhamma, these have to be special persons and referred to as *hippābhiññā*.**

But most people fall in the category of *dandhābhiññā* (slow at understanding the Dhamma). When the mind of such a practitioner has become calm and tasted the feeling of calmness he should remain in and enjoy this state of calmness for a while. Some people have been heard saying that they are afraid to become addicted to samādhi. But in reality the practitioner who has attained samādhi knows what it is like, and how can he be addicted to it since he knows what it feels like. Even if we are addicted to samādhi we must strive to step back from samādhi because we already know what it feels like to have such an addiction, as explained by past meditation teachers. We know what being addicted to samādhi is like and what the downsides of such an addiction are. **A mind that has never experienced samādhi and is afraid of being addicted to samādhi is similar to a poor man suffering hardship and misery, then when he begins to find ways to earn money is now afraid to become a millionaire, and who does not know**

what to do or where he will go if he becomes a millionaire.

The best way is probably to become a millionaire first. Once we have become a millionaire we should be smart enough to know how to spend money, if we have any intelligence we should be able to decide how we will spend our money. If we are smart enough whatever happens should not result in anything disastrous.

But as we have heard from past meditation teachers, there are some downsides to being addicted to samādhi. **When our mind enters calmness and becomes One we will know what happiness within samādhi feels like, and we will gain trust in ourselves. We can then choose to withdraw from deep samādhi to do contemplative meditation in order to attain whatever level of wisdom we choose. It is better than never having attained and tasted samādhi at all. Those who have never attained calmness may even question whether the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha, is real or a deception. On the other hand if the mind has attained calmness and become One, and absolutely One, then that person will have a deep trust in the Buddha, in the Dhamma and in the Sangha anchored firmly within himself. They will be firm believers in the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha.**

Only when the mind has experienced appanā samādhi will the practitioner have a firm belief within himself. But if the

mind has yet to attain that stage, and there exists only faith or belief, the mind will still wobble in all directions, right and left, front and back. **At this stage the practitioner is susceptible to be led in any other directions, because his mind is not yet sturdy, not resolute enough because this mind has not yet tasted the samādhi that the Buddha and the meditation teachers mention. Therefore practicing the Dhamma to attain samādhi is a duty and is all important for practitioners to attain. A question is whether we must attain samādhi so that the mind becomes One as a prerequisite before the practitioner can begin contemplative work to attain wisdom. In reality one should strive toward wisdom together with striving toward samādhi. Whatever event comes to the fore we need to focus on and contemplate it.** For example upon seeing someone dying we have to realize that we ourselves will have to die as well one day. Whenever we see loathsome and unattractive sights, such as animal carcasses that are putrid with sores all over, we can say to ourselves that this is the fate of all living beings in this world, and even ourselves one day will be similarly dehydrated and withered, we will become like those we see. When we see an old man, we may tell ourselves that in the past he must have been a young man, but he is now old, one day we will become like him. These reflections are the beginning of the contemplative and introspective part of meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā). **We may say that this is or is not insight meditation, but such reflective thoughts that**

start to see the true nature or the reality of things go in the direction of insight meditation.

Vipassanā (insight meditation) may be defined as a way to attain wisdom (paññā) through the practice of sīla, samādhi, paññā. Vipassanā is insight into the true nature of things. Wherever a human being is born in this world we see aniccaṃ, that which is not permanent, we see dukkha, that which is suffering, we see anattā that which is not self. From these we look at our own bodies, we sort out what our body is made up of. Our body is comprised of a skeleton structure, the bones form the structure of the body, no one will argue that they do not. But we have never contemplated that way and have never seen it that way, this is how the Buddha wants us to see ourselves as we are. Our body is made up of flesh, of a liver and kidneys, of intestines, of lungs, of a heart. Those who are medical doctors have seen all of these parts (of the human body), but they see these parts as they see other objects, they do not see these parts in terms of wisdom, they see these parts blandly like we might look at trees, at a hill, at a cliff, at a forest, but seeing these objects through the lens of Buddhism is seeing aniccaṃ, that which is not permanent, such as when we see a dead person. **When we see someone else die we do not feel anything but when we face death ourselves death is no longer an ordinary event, it will feel lonely and desolate. Therefore the Buddha wishes us to see the reality of things, see ourselves dying, focus on**

ourselves in the process of dying, do not think that only other people die, we must die like any other human being. Then one day when it is our turn we will ask ourselves why has my time come so fast. I have not yet done any good deeds, I have not done any bad deeds, why should I receive the results of bad deeds, why am I going to die this fast, we then become boisterous and emotional. But no matter how boisterous we might be we must face death. Therefore, we must contemplate our entire body, we must contemplate the death of our body, we must contemplate loathsome objects. We must have mindfulness of death, we must contemplate the body. Seeing things as they really are is what vipassanā is all about.

How should we go about doing samādhi so that our mind can become calm, and with sufficient calmness to become One, how do we induce our mind to prevent it from fantasizing in various directions. We must focus on the breath while breathing in and breathing out using mindfulness to force our mind to remain focused or using any other kammaṭṭhāna, not allowing miscellaneous thoughts to wander, keeping the mind in the moment, striving to stay in the moment the mind will remain in the moment, it will be the present moment Dhamma. Stay focused on the breath while breathing in and breathing out, or for example stay focused on body movement while the body is moving, listen to our heartbeats beating

Toub Toub Toub, focus on the heart, stay focused on the heart or focused on the walking steps while silently reciting Bud as the right leg steps out, Dho as the left leg steps out, keeping mindfulness at all times. Or while sitting let us look at how we are while sitting. For example if we sit in meditation mindfulness needs to stay within the confines of our body at all times, do not allow any thoughts from wandering to the outside. Have mindfulness that we are currently sitting down, we are sitting in the present conditions and circumstances, know the reality of things at this present moment, but do not allow miscellaneous thoughts to wander out. This is the way to practice samādhi so that the mind stays within ourselves.

As the mind is focused within ourselves we can do contemplation to gain wisdom (paññā) by sorting out the various parts of the body. What does our body consist of. What are we misguided about? We are misguided about the body. But whether we are misguided or not the fact is that our mind believes that our body belongs to us. And while we are misguided that our body belongs to us we are also misguided about our possessions, about our close relatives, about our friends, about our spouse, our ranks, our titles, our status in society. All these stem from our belief that this body belongs to me. **So that when we hold onto the belief that this body belongs to us, we are equally misguided about those external things believing that they also belong to us. But if we are no longer misguided into**

believing that the body belongs to us, then we will feel that these other external things are factors which we depend on but they are not ours, they are only factors that we depend upon while in this world, but cannot take them with us. One day when our body disintegrates these other things will disappear. When our body dies it will be cremated, what remains will be a pile of bones. Titles, ranks and status have vanished to wherever they came from. How can we possibly take them with us? But while we were alive we did depend on those things. But do not be misguided and intoxicated by them, or give them too much importance. Some people do give those factors too much importance, some people can be so miserable as to go out of their mind because of those things.

If we are conscious of the Dhamma within our mind we will know that the body really does not belong to us. We know that the body is made up of a skeleton comprising of a skull, collar bones, arm bones, rib bones, spinal column vertabrae, the bones of the pelvis, leg bones, knee bones, shin bones, feet bones, these are all made of bones. **When we see bones, we need to realize that this is what our body is made of. Once we see them as they are we need to revert back to our mind. The mind is the nāmadhamma (the intangible element) within ourselves that does not know what bones are like, that does not know what the body is like. With samādhi that has enough strength we can use it to contemplate**

which leads to wisdom (paññā) and see all these details of our body with great clarity. When we see the details with wisdom we revert back to the mind to allow the mind that knows to see it again very clearly. We will realize that we have been misguided in the belief that our body belongs to us. Within that frame of mind we realize that we have also become misguided, that other external things belong to us by creating attachments and assuming that these things belong to us as well. But do these things really belong to us? **As we use wisdom to investigate we realize the truth and must take a step back, because the body does not belong to us. If the body really belonged to us then we should be able to tell the body not to grow old, not to become sick, not to die. Can we do that? No we cannot. Since we cannot control the body how can the body belong to us? The mind will know all this by itself.** When we have had that realization, the learning will occur within the mind. We may also want to look at the mind to see what the mind is thinking about or how it feels. Sometimes our mind is depressed, sometimes it is cheerful, sometimes happy, sometimes sad. This is the way it is, it is all in the mind. As we contemplate on the outside such as the body, the body is rūpadhamma (objects that are tangible), or contemplate in terms of nāmadhamma (that which are formless such as thoughts, feelings, perception). Within ourselves we have two parts: rūpadhamma and nāmadhamma. Rūpadhamma refers to the physical body, nāmadhamma refers

to the mind that knows but which is linked to the body. But we know already after having attained samādhi and after the mind has become One that mind and body are different entities, this is what we learned from samādhi. But through contemplation leading to paññā we discovered that the reason nāmadhamma was obsessed with the body is because it always clung to the idea that the body belonged to it, this attachment and belief is enormously strong, with a resulting ego. It cannot tolerate criticism, anger will show itself as a result of criticism. This nāmadhamma will come out strongly to protect the body as it is seen to belong to us, because the body has come out of our parents, and ever since has held onto the belief that it is ours. **Only the Buddha's Dhamma can explain this point of view for the mind to contemplate and realize the truth. If we do not use the Dhamma to contemplate this point we will never grasp the truth. It is a fact that this exceedingly strong attachment to the body is such that truths and falsehoods cannot be distinguished from one another as if they are in the same dark pit. But by making use of the Dhamma starting from sīla, samādhi until we are able to sort out the body and differentiate between rūpadhamma and nāmadhamma, differentiate between the body and the mind, we place ourselves in a position to understand.**

We may look into our mind and ask ourselves why is it that we are so obsessed, so intoxicated, so attached, so loving of

the body, so possessive, so angry (at anyone hurting the body), so misguided (toward the body). The reason is that we rely on the body as a foundation, as a source of everything. But when we revert to that which knows, or our mind, we discover that this latter entity is the most important. According to Buddhism if there is something that impacts us we will have a response, If whatever impacts us does impact us in a way that does not please us then the emotion of *dosa* will be the response, if whatever impacts us is something that pleases us then the emotion of *rāga* will be the response. **The reaction which comes from our own mind can come in two aspects: pleasant or unpleasant. But only in rare cases does the mind remain neutral (neither pleased nor displeased), but normally the mind will either be pleased or sad. If we measure ourselves in terms of wisdom we will notice that there are only emotions of pleasure or sadness throughout the day, there will only be two responses: cheerfulness or unhappiness in our mind.**

How are we going to deal with the mind as Buddhism looks at cheerfulness and gloom as being *aniccā* meaning impermanence. And whatever is *aniccā* is *dukkha*, and whatever is *dukkha* is not self. This leads to the Dhamma of the three characteristics of existence, *aniccā* meaning impermanence being one of the three characteristics. Whatever is impermanent is *dukkha*, and *dukkha* is another characteristic. Whatever is *dukkha* is not self. Therefore we must use the main important

characteristic of anattā (not self) as the main Dhamma designed to deal with and suppress those beliefs and thoughts. Anattā is the most sublime Dhamma of Lord Buddha.

The disciples of Lord Buddha who achieved enlightenment during his time achieved enlightenment in their own different ways. A study of how they became enlightened indicates that they all used their own methods, but they all reflected on aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, anattā which is the common basis to eradicate defilements from the mind. Some disciples achieved enlightenment after listening to the Buddha's response to a question they posed. One particular disciple wanted to ask a question while the Buddha was residing in Mulagandhakuti (Buddha's hut on Khitchakut mountain, Rajgir, Bihar State, India). When the disciple arrived in front of the Buddha's hut it started to rain. The disciple waited under the hut's eave for the rain to stop before going in. While waiting he watched drops of water fall on the ground creating a bubble followed by the collapse of the bubble time and time again. Then one of the Buddha's sermon came to mind mentioning drops of rain and the ensuing collapsing bubbles of water as contemplation object: the action of each water drop hitting the ground and then the collapse of the bubble formed, its creation and its disappearance, hence impermanence and therefore dukkha. Since it is dukkha how can things like these be ours. Thereupon the disciple was able to let go while standing watching the water

drops hit the ground and he became an arahant. As you can see, seeing only the sight of rain drops he was able to let go in his mind and become an arahant. Thereupon instead of going into the Buddha's hut, he simply walked back to his own hut having solved the problem he had. He had completed his search and was now enlightened, there was no longer any need to ask the Buddha. He now understood the Dhamma as much as the Buddha, there was no longer any reason to ask the question he had prepared, and he immediately turned back. Whatever the Buddha knows this disciple knew as much, and that was the reason he did not ask the question he had prepared, and he immediately turned back. This was how this particular disciple achieved success. Other disciples may look at a faraway haze induced by the sun or a sun-induced mirage and realize its impermanent (*aniccā*) nature, attain enlightenment and become an arahant. Seeing impermanence is also to see *dukkha*, and whatever is *dukkha* is not ours, when the mind accepts the truth, enlightenment can occur as well.

Another example is the story of Bhikkhunī Uppalavaṇṇā who lighted a candle and stood watching the light of the candle, but the way she looked at the flame of the candle was to look at how the flame flickered with the breeze. She told herself that our mind behaves in the same way, our mind vacillates and flickers the same way as the flame reacts to the breeze. While looking at the flame she would look into her own mind, and was able

to let go inside her mind and became an arahant while focusing on the candle. But for us I do not know how many candles we would need to light, and furthermore we may even become angry if some wax inadvertently fell on our hands. But this is how by focusing on lighted candles some have become arahant.

Another example is the story of Bhikkhunī Paṭācārā. One day she was hauling a water jar on her shoulders as it has been done in India since time immemorial. Once arrived at her living quarters she put down the jar and used the water to wash her feet. As she poured water and washed her feet the water seeped into the soil, as she poured water on her feet a second time the water seeped into the soil a little bit further, the third time around the water seeped in the soil farther out. This was all it took for her to see aniccaṃ by comparing what she saw as a human life being born and dying at various ages: dying as a child, dying as a young man or woman, dying as an elderly person, all of them dying. What she saw was aniccaṃ or impermanence. **As she realized this fact she reflected by looking inside her mind and saw aniccaṃ within herself and attained enlightenment here and there. She had become an arahant just by looking at water being spilled while washing her feet three times. If we study the lives of various Buddhist saints who attained enlightenment we will find that while they practice meditation (bhāvanā) they do not always see exactly the same things. Upon consideration we find that they see aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ,**

anattā or the three characteristics of existence, see that which is impermanent, whatever is impermanent will bring (about) dukkha, whatever is dukkha is anattā or not self. Then practitioners will reach into their minds and use the power of tapadhamma, a process that automatically destroys defilements based on sīla, samādhi, paññā, sīla being compared to the bark of a tree, samadhi being compared to the sapwood, and paññā being compared to the heartwood to cleanse their mind until enlightenment occurs. That is like ripping off the hull from the rice seed. Luang Por compares the process to opening up seeds of rice by passing them through a rice mill or taking off the hull from the rice seed one way or another leaving the glutinous rice. After the hull has been removed the rice grain will never germinate when planted. But if the rice hull and the embryo bud (germ) are planted in the appropriate soil given the proper environment then germination can occur. **Similarly if the mind contains the germs of rāga, dosa, moha when it leaves this body and is reborn in another body these germs are reactivated. On the other hand we can use tapadhamma or automatic application of sīla, samādhi, paññā to scrutinize, reconsider, reflect, to remove the rice hull out, meaning to clean-up our own mind from defilements, from rāga, dosa, moha. When these germs have been eradicated from the mind, all that remains is purity, or that which remains is the glutinous rice. And wherever it is planted it will never germinate.**

The saying *Nibbānaṃ Paramaṃ Sukhaṃ* (nibbana is the highest bliss or nibbana reflects a state of utmost happiness where disturbances cannot come near). There is nothing that can be reborn as the germ that causes rebirth has been eradicated. It is like white rice, it is something that is absolutely pure. The germ causing rebirth meaning *rāga*, *dosa*, *moha* can no longer disturb us, they are now in different realms. It is finished. **The mind is now beyond the defilements of *rāga*, *dosa*, *moha* that have now detached themselves and moved out. A comparison is like a space capsule that has been launched into space until it is beyond the earth's gravity, the capsule is in another realm, it is now different from anything on earth. The mind which is now pure and beyond what occurs on earth, is above everything, beyond any make-believe arguments. Nibbanam paramam sukham or nibbāna occurs when that has been achieved. Nibbāna, the state of ultimate happiness, has been achieved and everything now ends.**

The Buddha has laid down the foundations for Buddhism for his disciples from bhikkhus, bhikkhunīs, laymen, to laywomen starting from *sīla* (precepts). For example on this Māgha Pūjā day the Buddha laid down guidelines to administer monks. Then he laid out guidelines for novices and lay followers, in which lay followers are to abide by the 5 *sīla* or the 8 *sīla*. Abiding by *sīla* can be compared to the bark of a tree, the sapwood can be compared to *samādhi*. When *samādhi* has sufficient strength

contemplation can be used and leads to wisdom within our mind. Our own mind can be developed to gain knowledge no matter whether it is contemplating make-believe objects (samudaya) or whether the contemplation is focused on the noble-path (magga). This knowledge is acquired in the same place. **If the mind leans toward make-believe objects then it follows make-believe arguments, if the mind leans toward the noble-path then the mind follows the noble-path, it depends which path we choose to follow. If we live with the Dhamma in our mind and adapt concepts of righteousness, think in terms of causes and consequences according to Buddhism, contemplate according to the reality of how things are, then we are travelling on the noble-path to enlightenment. If we use our mind to encourage defilements such as anger, or obsession with fortune, with rank, status, and praise, then we lean toward the world of make-believe which leads to suffering. But if we encourage the mind to seek wisdom by contemplating and see things as they are by seeing aniccā, dukkha, anattā and then let go, then this is the noble-path to enlightenment. Therefore the noble-path to enlightenment and the path to the world of make-believe that leads to suffering originate from the same point.**

Therefore let us all remember what Luang Por has said that two outcomes may come out from the same mind: either black or white, either being depressed or cheerful, all come out from the

same point, from the mind. Yet neither of these outcomes are permanent, cheerfulness is impermanent and in some cases can even turn into depression. Being depressed is also impermanent, it can even become cheerfulness. These things are deceiving, these are *aniccam*, whatever is impermanent causes *dukkha*, whatever causes *dukkha* is not us. **The Buddha's Dhamma has an end point to all of these which is *nibbāna*. It is the utmost goal for all four types of Buddhist devotees: *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunīs*, laymen and laywomen followers, who have the determination and whose minds are already aiming high. If our mind is aiming at lowly pursuits, aiming at earthly possessions or even heavenly possessions, such as wanting to be wealthy like others, meaning that our mind is fixated in *lokiya* or worldly pleasures. If our mind aims at *lokuttara* (super-mundane) it will focus itself in the same direction as those who hope to escape from *dukkha* in the cycle of birth and rebirth and do not wish to die and be reborn. If our mind has attained that level it is like the grain of white rice, it will not die and be reborn again, it will become *Nibbanam Paramam Sunyam* (*nibbāna* is free from suffering), *Nibbanam Paramam Sukham* (*nibbāna* is the highest bliss).**

As today is a most important day Luang Por talked about the practice of the Dhamma for the lay devotees. I therefore mention the Dhamma as being a set of guidelines for us to pay attention

to, to understand the issues involved and use these guidelines to do the practice. If we have not yet achieved some of those points let us listen to the ways of the Buddhist path. The path that Lord Buddha has taught us to practice is to abide by *sīla* (defilements), *samādhi* (meditative calm), and *paññā* (wisdom). This is the way, there is no other way.

From here on let us prepare ourselves to sit in *samādhi*, let us do the practice to show our faith once again, let us listen to sermons of the Dhamma and the ways of thoughts of the Dhamma. If we do not listen or hear anything about the Dhamma how can we become learned in the ways of the Dhamma. We must learn by listening to the Dhamma. *Sutamayaapaññā* meaning wisdom is attained in the moment while hearing and listening. *Cintamayaapaññā* meaning wisdom is attained based on what one hears and listens after which one visualizes, reflects and reviews. *Bhāvanāmayapaññā* meaning wisdom is attained through concentration meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*) to calm the mind and then after having attained calmness through contemplative meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) to attain wisdom by seeing the truth in the objects of contemplation. From then on the process is to uproot defilements such as *rāga*, *dosa*, *moha* from the mind. The mind becomes pure and attains enlightenment. It will no longer return to deaths and rebirths in the never-ending cycle of life and death because the mind is no longer attached to anything, it has let go of all attachments.

Now we will sit in samādhi and do the practice. After you have sat down in samādhi bring the palm of your hands to your chest to pay respect to our teachers and Lord Buddha our supreme teacher who taught us to sit in samādhi. We then silently recite *Buddho, Dhammo, Saṅgho* three times and bring our hands down, then we may offer mettā (loving kindness) to others: ***let me be happy, let others be happy, if I am happy let others be happy as well, whatever happiness I yearn for, let others receive the same happiness that I yearn for. This is the essence of extending loving kindness (compassion).*** This allows our mind to become soft and nimble before we start the practice. All beings, everybody in this world, wish happiness for themselves. Then using the kammaṭṭhāna that we have been practicing we focus on the breath while breathing in and breathing out. Or we may choose to contemplate our bodies, contemplate the bones in our body, contemplate loathsome objects, or contemplate death, depending on whichever practice has yielded results, then do that particular practice. Those who are starting in the practice may focus on the breath in and out, this is what Luang Por suggests for beginners, when breathing in know that we are breathing in, when breathing out know that we are breathing out while reciting silently the words *Buddho, Buddho, Buddho*.

From now on continue to focus on the breath while breathing in and breathing out, or you may wish to contemplate the bone structure in the human skeleton as we have already practiced.



*The Buddha once exclaimed
in seeing the significance that Ven. Cūḷa Panthaka has sat
crossed-legs, his body held erect, with mindfulness
established to the fore*

***“With steady body,
with steady awareness,
whether standing, sitting or lying down,
a monk determined on mindfulness
gains one distinction
after another.
Having gained one distinction
after another,
he goes where the King of Death
can’t see.”***

GLOSSARY

Ācariya	Teacher, meditation teacher; also used as a term of respect when referring to a senior monk.
anāgāmi	A non-returner. After death he will appear in one of the eventually attain nibbāna, never again to be reborn in this world.
anattā	Not-self. One of the essential doctrines as a part of three characteristics of existence.
anicca, aniccaṃ	Impermanent, inconstant, unsteady. Impermanence is one of the essential doctrines as a part of the three characteristics of existence.
arahant	A fully enlightened one or pure one. The arahant is the individual who has attained nibbāna.
asubha	Referring to a loathsome and repulsive object or objects.
bhāvanā	Meditation, mental cultivation or mental development. Bhāvanā either involves samatha (concentration

	meditation or samatha meditation) to gain one-pointedness of mind, or vipassanā bhāvanā (insight meditation, vipassanā meditation, or contemplative meditation) to gain wisdom (paññā).
bhikkhu	A Buddhist monk, a male member of the Buddhist Saṅgha.
bhikkhunī	A female Buddhist monk.
brahmā	Celestial beings who inhabit the first three realms of the fine material world. Beings reborn into those sublime realms are said to have experience with meditative absorptions (jhāna).
citta	The citta is the mind's essential knowing nature. When associated with a physical body it is referred to as "mind" or "heart". The underlying essence of mind where Dhamma and kilesa dwell.
dāna	Charity, generosity, giving, donating, offering. More generally the inclination to give, without expectation of the reward.
deva	Inhabitant of one of the celestial realms of sensual bliss, located immediately above the human realm.

Dhamma	The truth of the way things are, the Buddha's teaching.
dhamma	Event, a phenomenon in and of itself.
dhutaṅga	Dhutaṅga is a group of thirteen austerity or ascetic practices most commonly observed by the practitioners of the Thai Forest Tradition of Theravada Buddhism.
dosa	Anger, hatred, ill-will, rage, fury.
dukkha, dukkham	Suffering, pain, discontent. The unsatisfactory nature of all phenomena. A part of three characteristics of existence. Dukkha is the condition of fundamental discontent that is inherent within the very nature of all sentient existence. Essentially, it is the underlying sense of dissatisfaction that ultimately determines even the most pleasant experiences, for everything in the phenomenal world is subject to change and therefore unreliable. Thus, all saṃsāric existence is characterized by dukkha. The first of the Four Noble Truths.
kamma	The law of cause and consequence where every cause has a consequence.

kammatṭhāna	Literally the “basis of work”, kammatṭhāna refers to the “occupation” of a practicing Buddhist monk: namely the contemplation of certain meditation themes that are conducive to uprooting the defiling forces of greed, hatred and delusion. Objects of contemplation.
kasina	Basic visual objects of meditation: Earth, water, air/wind, fire, blue/green, yellow, red, white, enclosed space/hole/aperture, bright light.
kilesa	Mental defilement(s). Kilesa are negative psychological and emotional forces existing within the hearts and minds of all living beings. These defilements are of three basic types: greed, hatred, and delusion.
Luang Por	Term commonly used when addressing a monk (The term Por translates as father in the Thai language. An elder monk can be addressed to as Luang Ta and Luang Poo, where Ta and Poo translates as grandfather on mother’s side and father’s side respectively)
meditation	See bhāvanā.

mettā	Loving-kindness, friendliness, pure love, goodwill.
moha	Delusion, ignorance.
muditā	Empathic joy. Rejoicing with others in their happiness.
nāmadhamma	That which is formless such as feelings, perceptions. Things that are intangible.
nibbāna	Literally meaning extinguished, nibbāna is compared to a lamp or a fire going out. The extinguishing of this fire frees the mind from everything that binds it to the cycle of rebirth and the suffering experienced therein. Nibbāna represents absolute freedom, the supreme happiness – the ultimate goal of the Buddhist training.
nimitta	A vision. An image that arises at a certain level of samādhi.
paññā	Wisdom, discernment, insight, intelligence, common sense, ingenuity.
peta	Supernatural being described as undergoing suffering greater than that of humans, particularly an extreme level of hunger and thirst.
rāga	Desire, attachment to a sensory object.
rāgaṇhā	Lust, attachment, sexual craving.

rūpadhamma	Objects that can be perceived through anyone of the 5 senses. Objects that are tangible. Material objects.
samatha	Samatha meditation, or samatha bhavana, deals with calming the mind.
samādhi	Meditative calm, concentration, mental absorption. Samādhi has many levels and classifications. In momentary (khaṇika) samādhi the citta ‘converges’ into a still calm state for only a moment before withdrawing on its own. This is the initial stage of samādhi. In access (upacāra) samādhi the citta “converges” into a prolonged state of calm and stillness which is at the same time a state of enhanced awareness concerning internal and external phenomena that make contact with the internal and external sense bases. At the access level, normal thought processes (the inner dialogue) are temporarily suspended, while powers of perception are heightened. This is the intermediate stage of samādhi. In full-absorption (appanā) samādhi the citta completely “converges” into

	the very base of samādhi. Perceptions of body and mind totally disappear from awareness at that time, leaving only the “knowing nature” of the citta alone on its own.
Saṅgha	The community of the Buddha’s disciples. The Buddhist monastic order.
saṅkhāra	As the fourth component of personality (saṅkhāra-khandha) it refers to thought and imagination; that is, the thoughts that constantly form in the mind and conceptualize about one’s personal perceptions. Saṅkhāra creates these ideas and then hands them on to saññā, which interprets and elaborates on them, making assumptions about their significance.
saññā	Label, perception, allusion, act of memory or recognition, interpretation.
sati	Mindfulness, self-collectedness, powers of reference and retention.
sīla	Moral behavior, morality, virtue. The precepts.
sotāpanna	Stream enterer. This stream will flow inexorably to nibbāna ensuring that one will be reborn at most only seven more

	times, and only into human or higher realms.
taṇhā	Desire, craving, thirst, want, belonging, yearning.
Tipiṭaka	The Buddhist scriptures.
ubosatha sīla	In addition to the 5 sīla (precepts) of ordinary lay men and women that include (i) Not to torment any living beings to their death (ii) Not to steal or obtain anything from others through cheating (iii) Thinking about abstinence and refraining from having a relationship with someone from the other sex to commit adultery (iv) Not to mislead anyone or tell a lie to anyone (v) Refraining from taking intoxicants. The 8 ubosatha sīla include an additional 3 precepts : (vi) Refraining from eating from noontime onward (vii) Refraining from dancing, or watch other people dance, sing or listen to other people sing, avoid watching any amusements which go against the power of good deeds and good fortune, and not adorning ourselves with garlands and fragrance nor wear elaborate and ornate

	embellishments (viii) Refraining from sitting on and sleeping in an elevated bed that is unreasonably high, that has a mattress filled with kapok and cotton, with elaborate bed covers adorned with various silver and gold ornaments.
upekkhā	Equanimity or detachment.
vassa	Rains retreat. A three-month period from July to October corresponding roughly to the rainy season, in which each monk is required to live settled in a single place and not wander freely about.
vaṭṭa	The cycle of birth, death and rebirth.
vipassanā	Insight meditation, contemplative meditation.

NOTE FROM THE TRANSLATOR:

The translator has been a student of the lineage of Thai Forest Monks for several years and has had the good fortune to pay respect to a number of Venerable Ācariya in North Eastern Thailand. In 2001 the translator ordained as a monk at Ratchabophit Sathit Maha Simaram Temple in Bangkok for one rain retreat according to Thai tradition and was given permission by Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako, Abbot of Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery in Udon Thani Province, to spend the rain retreat at his monastery.

As Venerable Ācariya Inthawai Santussako wished to publish a book in English for his English-speaking disciples on the Dhamma practice based on 7 Dhamma talks he has given at Na Kham Noi Forest Monastery, the translator accepted to do the translation of those Dhamma talks from the Thai language.

The translator asks the readers for their forgiveness for any mis-translations from the original Thai text due to his low level of understanding of the pure Dhamma of Lord Buddha.

With Metta

Woraphat Arthayukti
Bangkok, Thailand
30 September 2018.





No escape from bad deeds

The monk Cakkhupāla determined to fulfill his practice even at the cost of his eyes and eventually he attained Awakening; the Buddha explained the deed he did in the past which caused his loss of sight in the present, and he summarized the teaching with this verse.

***“Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā, manoseṭṭhā manomayā,
manasā ce paduṭṭhena bhāsatī vā karotī vā,
tato naṃ dukkham-anveti cakkam va vahato padam.”***

*“Mind precedes thoughts, mind is their chief,
their quality is made by mind,
if with base mind one speaks or acts
through that suffering follows one
like a wheel follows ox’s foot.”*

*Dhamma verses, Dhammapada, edited and translated
by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, p. 16.*

